AMTIX!

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
September 1986
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MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
AMSTRAD COMPUTERS

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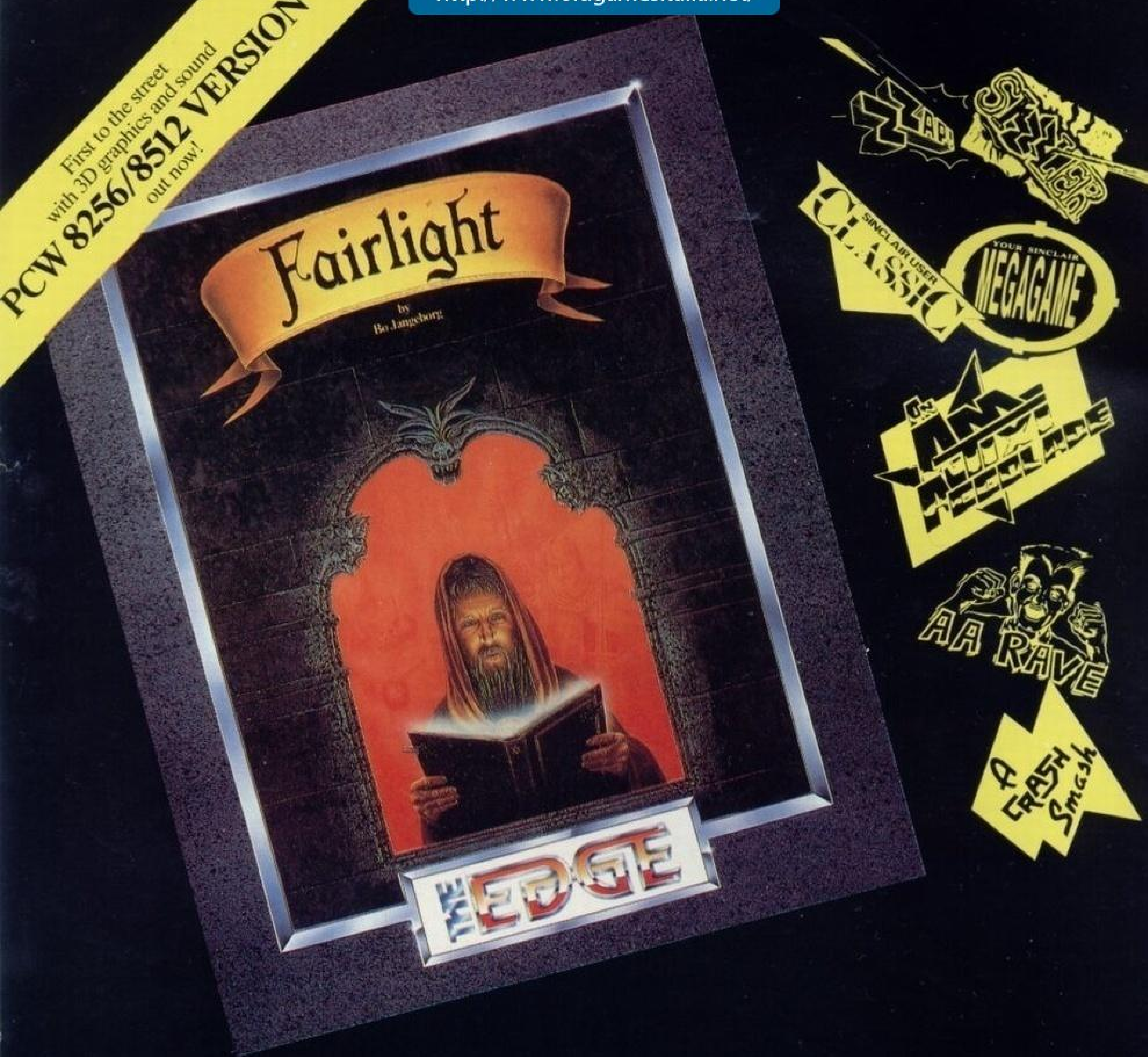
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*Crash Readers voted Fairlight 'Best Graphics,' 'Best Music,'
the Art Award' for 1985.

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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

Cover by Oliver Frey

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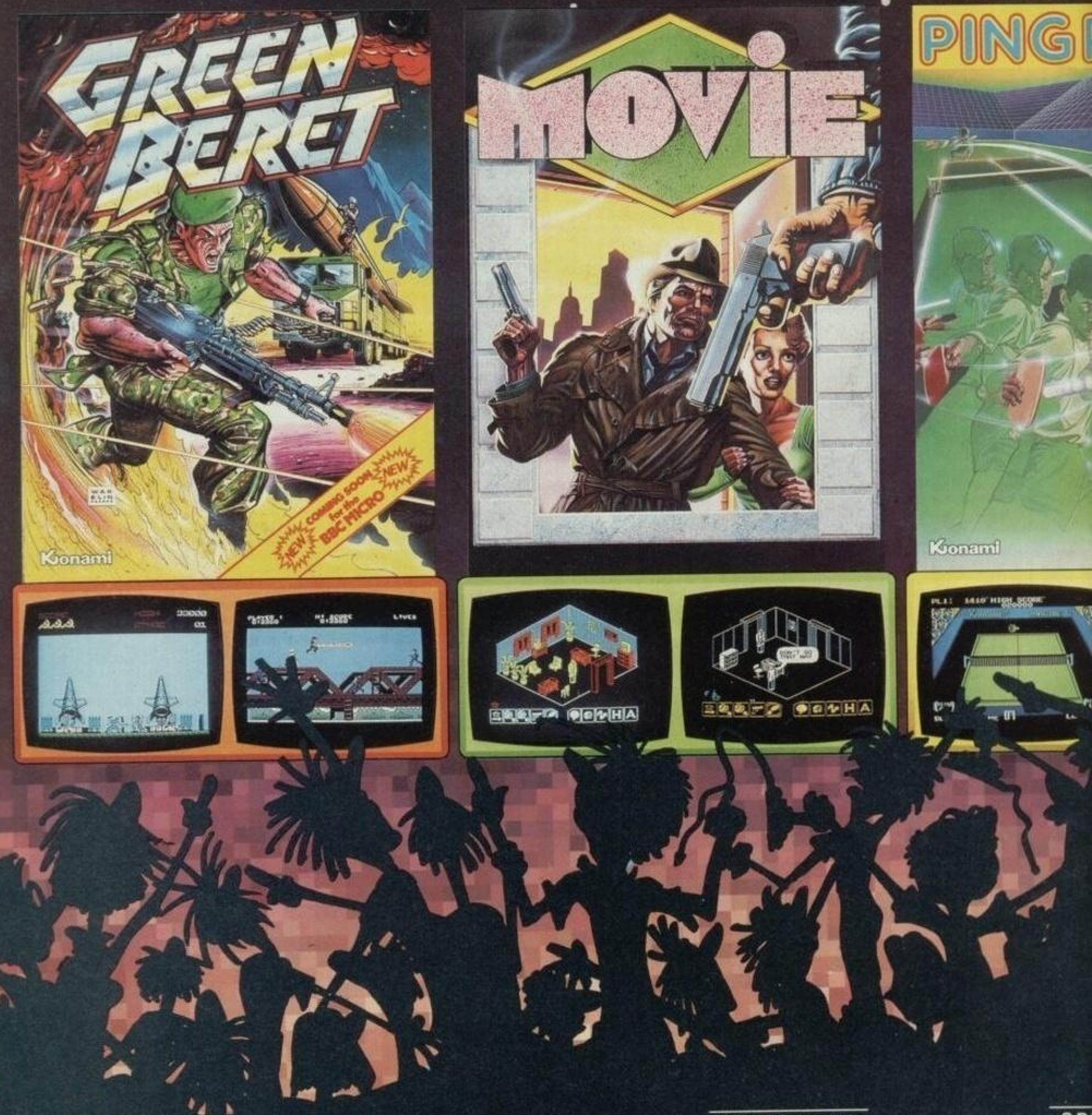
The next issue of AMTIX! goes on sale from 4th September, and there are few people in the universe who will forgive you if you are not waiting outside your newsagents when it opens.

THE GOTO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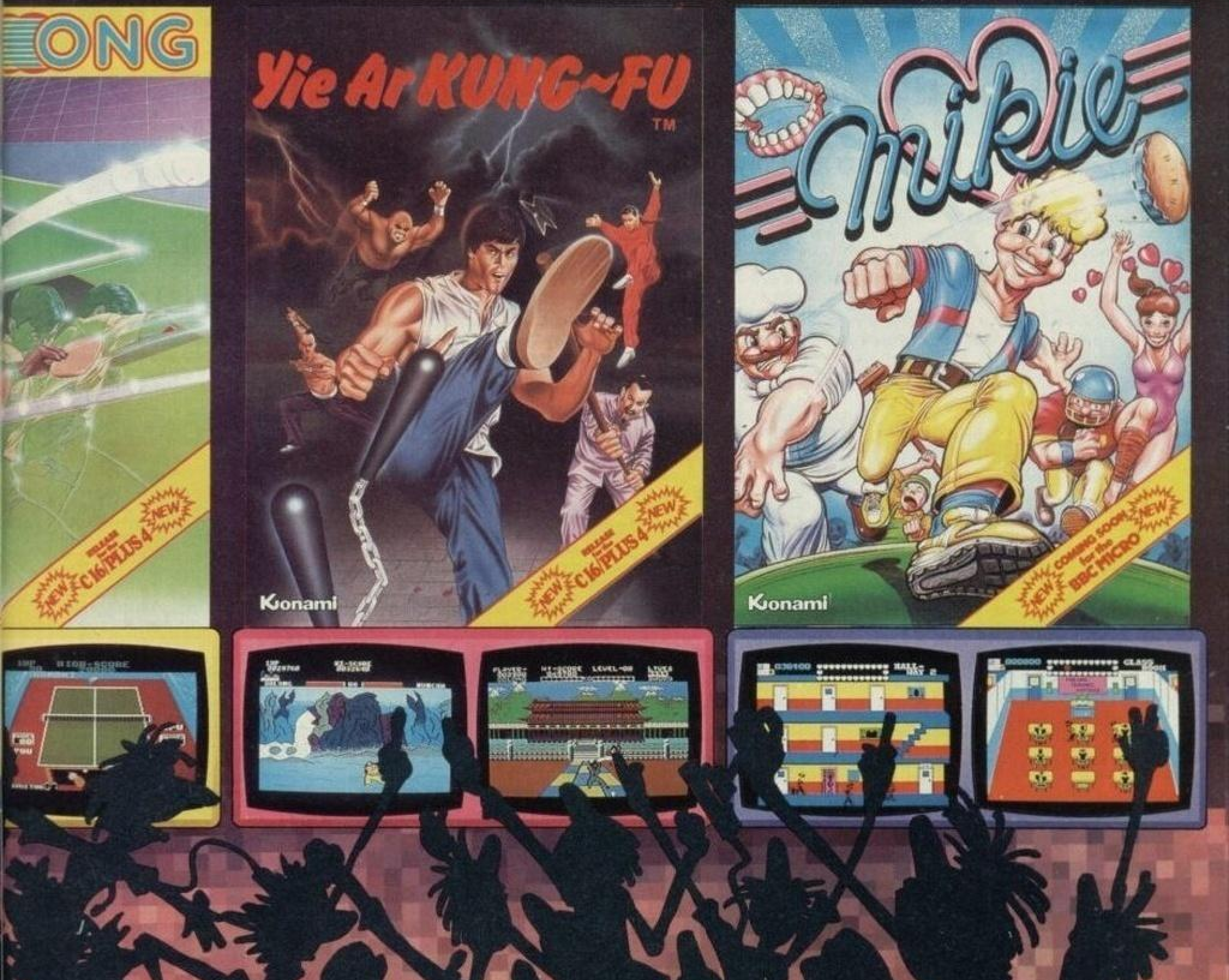
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The delectable Ms Saffron Trevaskis' candid replies to your mail (Or Males — she's not fussy).
Adventure reviews from the leaping Leprechaun, Sean Masterson.
Fantastic Competitions from the fumbling Comps Minion.
Mr Rignall's enigmatic little, but jolly useful, Tips and Pokes.
Concise updates on the technical side of the Amstrad.

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AMTIX!

AMTIX! TOWERS IS BEING REBUILT

AMTIX! Towers has been surrounded by scaffolding in recent weeks. Consolidation has been the name of the game and there are some major changes afoot.

There we all were seated around the conference table and after much pondering a discussion broke out on how we all thought you, our loyal readers, deserved a new improved biological washing pow — no sorry wrong commercial — a new improved AMTIX!. The new arrivals, Lee, Tony and Dick, all thought it a marvellous idea and after a democratic meeting, and my casting vote, it was decided to instigate the following changes. All will be revealed in next month's issue but in the meantime here are a few tasters.

Obviously the first thing that hits you about AMTIX! is the logo. Now to be quite honest we have had a few moans about it's look, mainly because many readers found it too difficult to read. So at the top of this page we unveil the new logo devised by our very own art supremo, Oliver Frey. Everyone at AMTIX! thinks it's a winner! The new logo will be on the cover next month and soon afterwards the logo will be appearing on T shirts, caps, sweat shirts and all sorts of AMTIX! goodies. Incidentally, if you want a piece of history there are a few T shirts, caps and sweat shirts, with the old AMTIX! logo on, still for sale but they're going fast.

Everyone's favourite crumbly Editor, Malcolm H, (that's me)is also having a facelift, metaphorically speaking of course! At his age everything else is nigh impossible! From now on his ego corner (Sorry - Editorial) will have a new sparkling personality,(he's swopped his pint for Bucks Fizz)! Yes folks, with my Champagne and fresh orange juice liquid diet I intend to refresh the parts of Arnolds other magazines cannot reach!

Another mega signing at AMTIX! Towers has been that of Ms Saffron Trevaskis who joins the team as editor of On the Spot. To make it clear who's boss she has already 'politely' thwacked us all with her legendary umbrella, so readers please be nice to Auntie Saffron. You have been warned!

IDEAS ARE FLOWING

Ideas flow fast at AMTIX! Towers as do the egos of our new staff, Messieurs Paddon, Clarke and Eddy — our eminent joystick junkies, and their persuasive tongues soon convinced art they should have their mug shots beside every comment they wrote. What an ego trip! Perhaps we should issue anti-ego glasses while you're reading future magazines?

With the sudden growth of our software reviewers' egos we thought some of our readers' egos would be doing the same. From next month our Top Twenty feature will include the AMTIX! **High Score Challenge**. Techno whiz kid Anthony Clarke is the first to throw down the gauntlet. If you are an expert at *Ghosts and Goblins* contact me as soon as possible. Who knows? You could soon be travelling to the sleepy town of Ludlow(it's in SHROPSHIRE!). Tony Techno is just waiting to unlease his joystick talents against some unsuspecting reader.

Lee Paddon has soon settled into his new role as Assistant Editor and Software Editor for AMTIX! As already stated home is somewhere south of the big smoke but since his arrival at AMTIX! Towers he has been slumming it in a pub on the outskirts of the Shropshire New Town, Telford. So much for curing his drink habit!

On the presentation front you'll have noticed the grids at the top of some of the pages have gone. Nice Mr Shiner has finally used up most of his pad of graph paper so the mathematical days are coming to an end! In the next issue all the grids will have disappeared. You'll also notice a small change on the OTS page, now that Saffron has taken over! The letter box should have her brolly coming through it. The Accolades will have a new symbol and are printed with a colour wash on the paper and there's a new look to the reviews, well almost! We also intend to run a regular fanzine feature and the user club page is to include a directory of all user clubs. If you want to be included send off details of your club straight away.

But don't worry too much readers. The actual contents won't be changing too drastically. There will still be action packed reviews, compelling competitions, penetrating previews, scintillating strategy, articulate adventuring and lots of fascinating features. All that alliteration gives me a headache. The humble minion will still be kicked like the office cat, get blamed for all the wrong doings, and persuaded to make the tea, and trudge down to the local sandwich shop every day to get their elevenses.

OTHER CHANGES AT NEWSFIELD

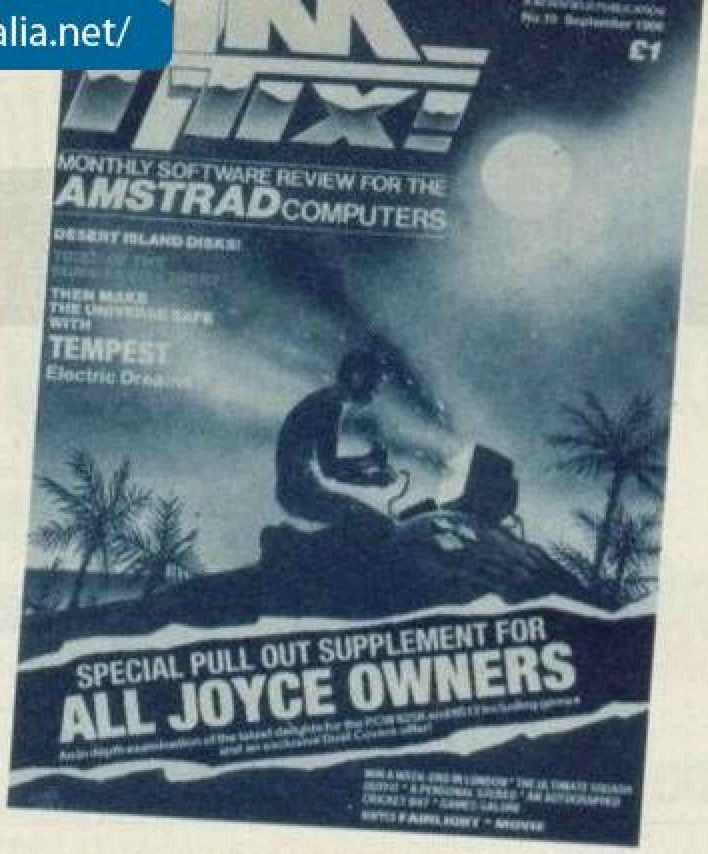
Things are really happening at Newsfield Towers. Aunty Aggie and Guru Denise are soon to depart to new offices in sleepy ▶

A GIANT POSTER FOR ALL READERS

To celebrate the launch of their United Kingdom operations, French software company, Infogrames, have got together with Newsfield Publications Ltd to give away a giant poster of their first game, *Mandragore*.

The adventure game is set in the land of Mandragore and is available both on cassette and disk.

One side of the A2 size poster, which measures over 59 cms by 42 cm, is a four colour picture of the land of Mandragore, while the reverse side is covered with information about the company's French and British headquarters, the people who head both operations — managing director in Britain is David Crossweller, formerly head of Media Matters. There is also details of the game and information about other releases from the company.



Anthony Clarke, or Tony as he prefers to be called, has been having loads of fun linking up Joyces to Apricots, printers to Amstrads and interfaces to anything! He's also a cunning devil when it comes to improving games in his favour!

Ludlow, together with the rest of the Mail Order crew, and all will be sharing their new home with a new magazine.

What new magazine you ask? Well hints have already been dropped but, to tell all, our erstwhile anti-hero of our sister magazine, CRASH, has negotiated a mega deal with the powers that be to lend his name to a new publication — **LM** — and AMTIX! readers will be among the first to see it. The first issue is going to be given away with our Christmas special so, beware, there's going to be an awful lot of reading for you to do!

LM is going to be led by our resident publisher, Roger Kean, who has now deserted AMTIX!, and he promises it is going to be an ultra exciting read, covering all aspects of life as a teenager, from money and jobs to music and computer games, to films, videos and books.

Mega man mountain, Gary Liddon, is no longer resident in Ludlow. He has scampered off to London with Flathead Andy Wright (ex-Activision) to set up a software house by the name of THALAMUS which is owned by Newsfield. Gary and Andy are hard at work sorting out their programme of releases which will include Amstrad machines. More news from them soon!

I would also like to welcome Massimo Valducci to Newsfield. Massimo, or Mass as he prefers to be known, lives in Shrewsbury but has Italian (Mafia?) connections. He has been drafted in to sub-edit all the copy of the magazine so if there are any glaring errors I can now blame him! All the new helpers should ensure that AMTIX! will get even better and that's no bad thing as I am sure you will all agree.

OTHER MATTERS

Looks like being an extremely busy six weeks for AMTIX! At the beginning of September we shall all be at the PCW Show in London and four weeks later we shall be making our presence known at the Amstrad Show at Hammersmith's Novotel again!

We have also decided to change the publication date of the magazine from the middle of the month to the beginning. This will take effect with next month's issue 12 of AMTIX! which will hit the streets on Thursday, September 4. You can never say life is dull in the computer magazine world.

MALCOLM HARDING

Richard Eddy has wasted no time in becoming an ace reviewer and has also found his way both to the Tea Room and to the local fodder shop where each morning he trudges to pick up vast amounts of food for the ravenous AMTIX! team.

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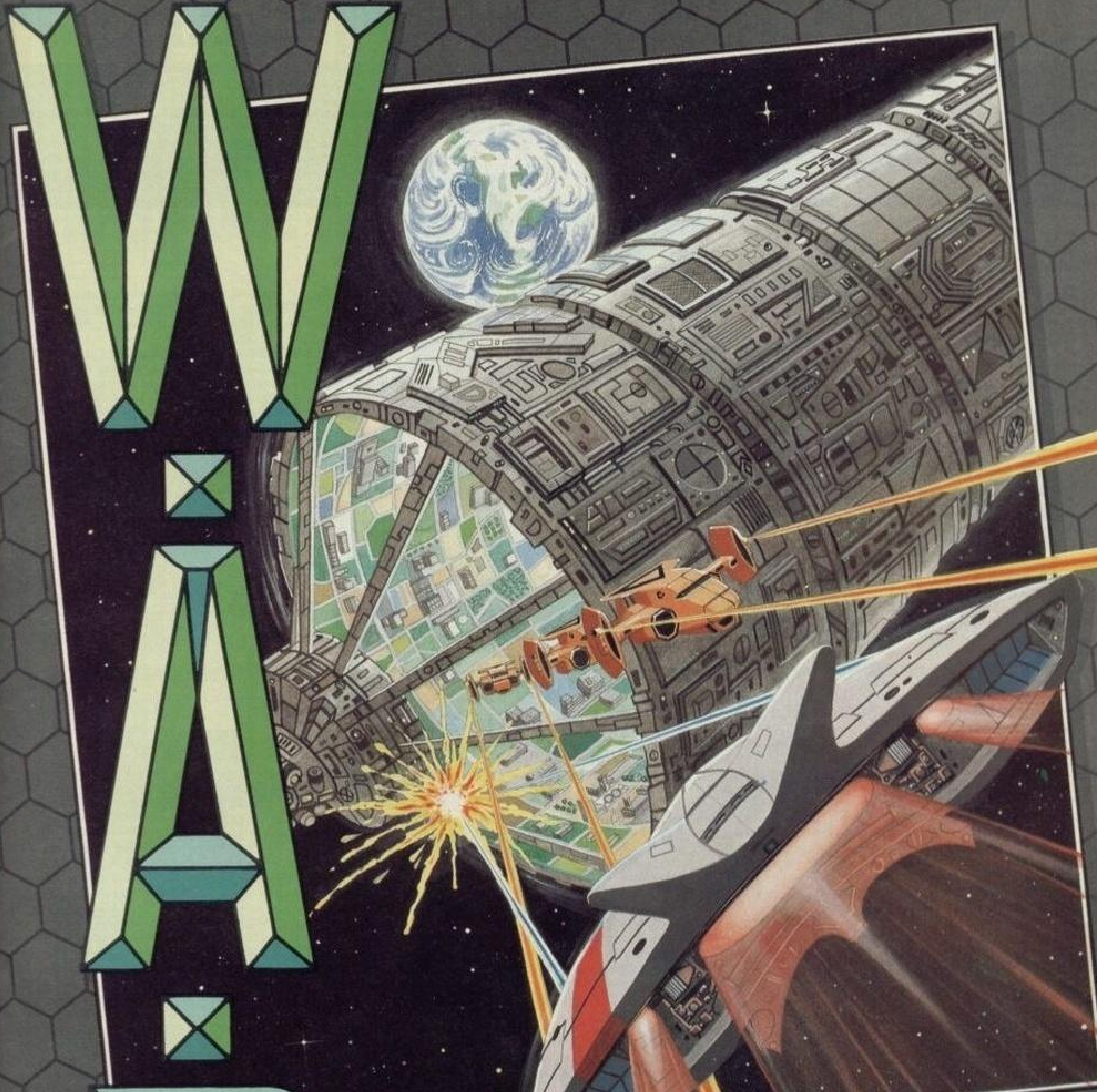

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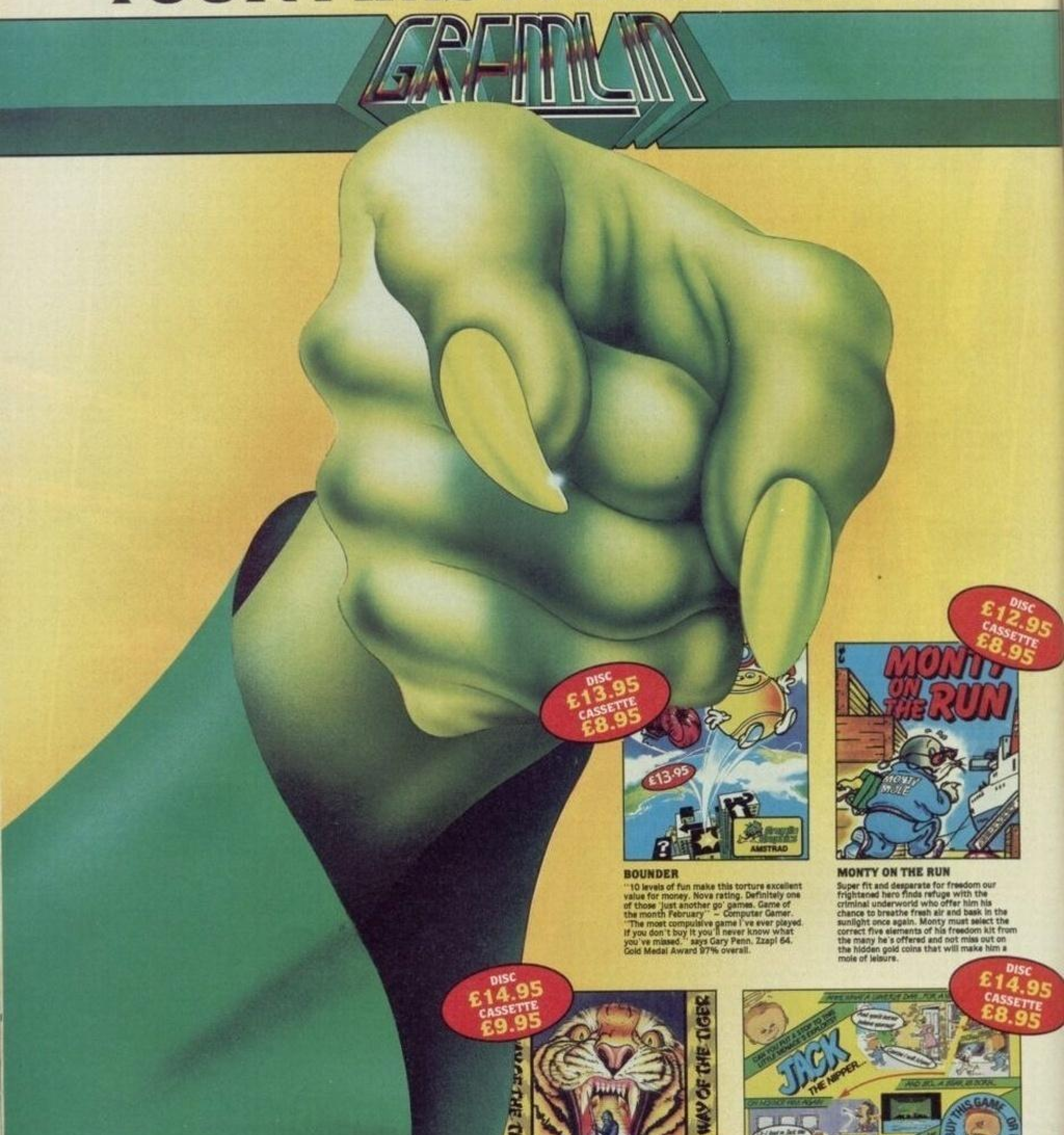


BOUNDER

''10 levels of fun make this torture excellent value for money. Nova rating. Definitely one of those 'just another go' games. Game of the month February'' – Computer Gamer. ''The most compulsive game I've ever played. If you don't buy it you'll never know what you've missed.'' says Gary Penn, Zzap! 64. Gold Medal Award 97% overall.

MONTY ON THE RUN

Super fit and desperate for freedom our frightened hero finds refuge with the criminal underworld who offer him his chance to breathe fresh air and bask in the sunlight once again. Monty must select the correct five elements of his freedom kit from the many he's offered and not miss out on the hidden gold coins that will make him a mole of leisure.

THE WAY OF THE TIGER

Enter the world of Avenger, a Ninja warrior of unparalleled skills and deadly powers, as he battles the forces of evil in defence of his faith and protection of the weak.

Be calm and stay silent as the outstanding animation and unrivalled combat routines take you to levels of action you'd never have thought possible.

Experience the stunning effects of triple scrolling action as you master the techniques of Hand to Hand combat, Pole Fighting and the skills of the Samurai Sword.

And when you believe you've succeeded in overcoming all the odds, the next in this thrilling series of adventures will beckon you forward to a further challenge of death.

JACK THE NIPPER

He's wicked. He's evil. Can he ever be stopped? Jack the Nipper plays the tricks and creates the havoc we all would have liked to have enjoyed. So why wait any longer.

Jack was tired of all the wimps in his town, their boring games and goody goody ways sent him to sleep. So, Jack being of a rather naughty disposition set about livening things up a bit, he picked up his trusty pea-shooter and scarpered off to cause some trouble.

This is where you come in to take on the role of Jack and use your imagination to be as naughty as possible doing the things you always wanted to do but dare not (YOU WIMP!!). Jump on things, pick them up and drop them, use your pea-shooter to create smashing effects and toot your horn at the cat.

Use the items you pick wisely then you must work out where you have to drop them to cause ultimate havoc. For instance what could you do with a tube of glue?

are Limited, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Shef

NEWS

TRIVIAL NEWS

Domark's official game of the cure for insomnia and unwanted party guests, *Trivial Pursuit*, is nearly here.

As is normal with **Domark**, this will be accompanied by the usual publicity fanfare (who can forget the free blood capsule for *Friday 13th*)? There will be a Golden Trivial Challenge compo amongst all the magazines (if the Comps Minion extracts his digit and gets the compo done). Oh yes, and a game. The game consists of answering questions which may be the usual printed up sort, or can be visual or audible. Then, after the question is presented, the assembled throng shout out the answers. The answer is then displayed, and the other players decide whether the correct answer was given.

Meanwhile, another non official version is planned from **Arcana Software**. This should be out at about the same time. As the blurb on the board game said, 'What great contests arise from trivial matters'.

Even if this sort of trivial stuff doesn't hit the top of the charts, **Domark** has a second string to its bow in the form of *Split Personalities*. This was called *Spitting Images*, until a certain well known TV series got a bit upset about this unofficial (i.e. unlicensed, so the TV people didn't get any money) spin off. It's all about assembling famous faces in the same fashion as the old sliding puzzles game. This slightly off the wall idea was well received on the Commodore and Spectrum, so lets hope Arnold gets a version soon and it's up to the same mark, I've always wanted to rearrange M Thatcher's and Ronnie Raygun's faces.

HOST OF GOODIES FROM SOFTEK AND THE EDGE

The empire of Dr Tim Langdell should be well represented at the PCW Show. Among the goodies being unveiled by **Softek** and **The Edge** are *Psi Chess*, *Palatron*, and *Bobby Bearing*.

The chess game has already been produced for the Spectrum and looks superb in 3D. *Palitron* is a science fiction 3D adventure set in a robotic world and jolly *Bobby Bearing* has already been acclaimed on the Spectrum.

HITTING OUT WITH FIST 11

Fist II, the follow up to *Fist*, is on the way from **Melbourne House**.

Before you all yawn and say 'not another combat game,' this is different and the best yet — or so **Melbourne House** would have us believe. Amongst the goodies promised are 100 screens of action and 700 sprites! I'd rather hit 'em than count 'em. The world of *Fist* II is a sprawling world of dank swamps and dark forests, of mountains and underground caves.

Amongst the chaps you have to beat senseless are Ninjas, Shoguns, warriors and soldiers. There's the odd savage beastie to stick the boot in on as well. The reward for hacking and bashing your way through all this is a glimpse of the volcano fortress of the evil warlord.

Not content with the usual 16 moves of your common or garden combat game, *Fist II* promises no less than 21. The extra moves are produced by having a limited range of moves depending on which bit of the game you are on.

A snip at £9.95, it should be turning up pretty chop chop, so it could be anytime before Christmas.

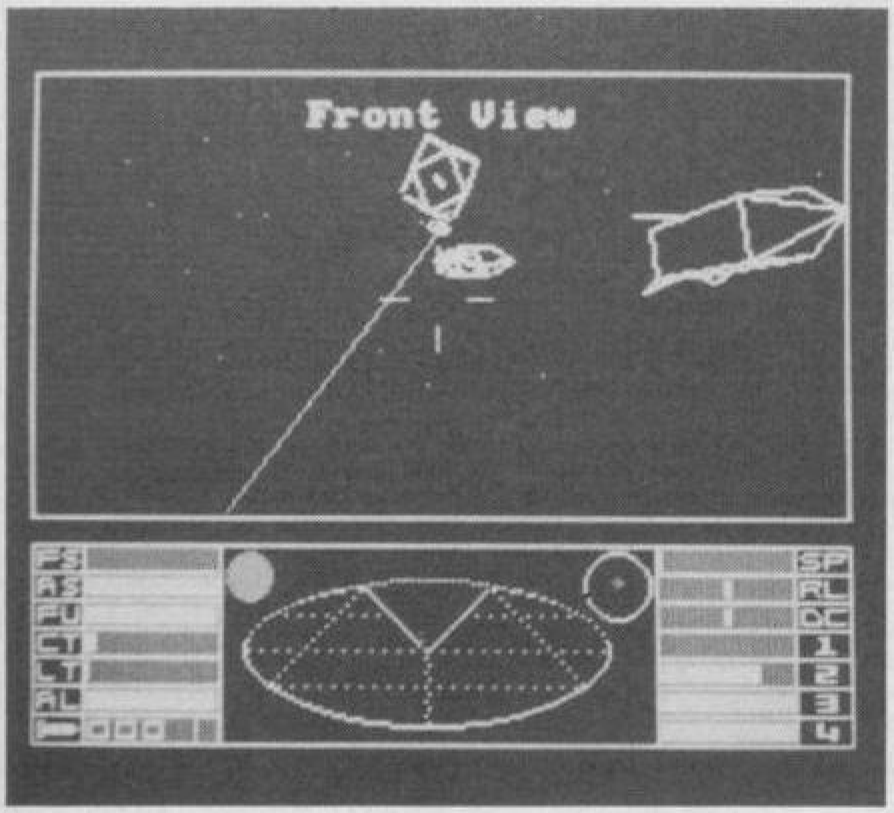
INTO THE DRAGON'S LAIR..

Liverpool based, **Software Projects**, recently threw a party for the media to give a sneak preview of their latest game, *Dragon's Lair*.

It has been described as a cross between an Arthurian romance and George and the Dragon. Our hero, Dirk the Daring, has to rescue King Aethelred's daughter, Princess Daphne, from the fiery breath of Singe the evil dragon. The game has nine screens and each one becomes successively more dangerous. By means of a falling disk you descend into the dungeons of the castle and progress to the Skull Hallway, haunted by a host of ghosts and ghoulies.

From there, by means of swinging ropes which hang above a steadily ascending fire, you get to old Singe's weapons' room where the weapons themselves assume an insidious life of its own. Next a series of ramps has to be negotiated; dally too long and they disappear from under you. At the same time gargoyle like monsters who don't have your best interests at heart, have to be repelled.

Past the ramps and gargoyle monsters is the tentacle room. This is Singe's laboratory where strange hybrids of creepie crawlies lurk waiting to take you on in combat. Once these insectoid nasties have been despatched, a ride on a second disk takes you to the penultimate level where the evil Phantom Knight awaits. Finally if you are very brave and resourceful you reach the dragon's lair and get the opportunity to slay the monster and free the beautiful princess.



ELITE IN A SPIN

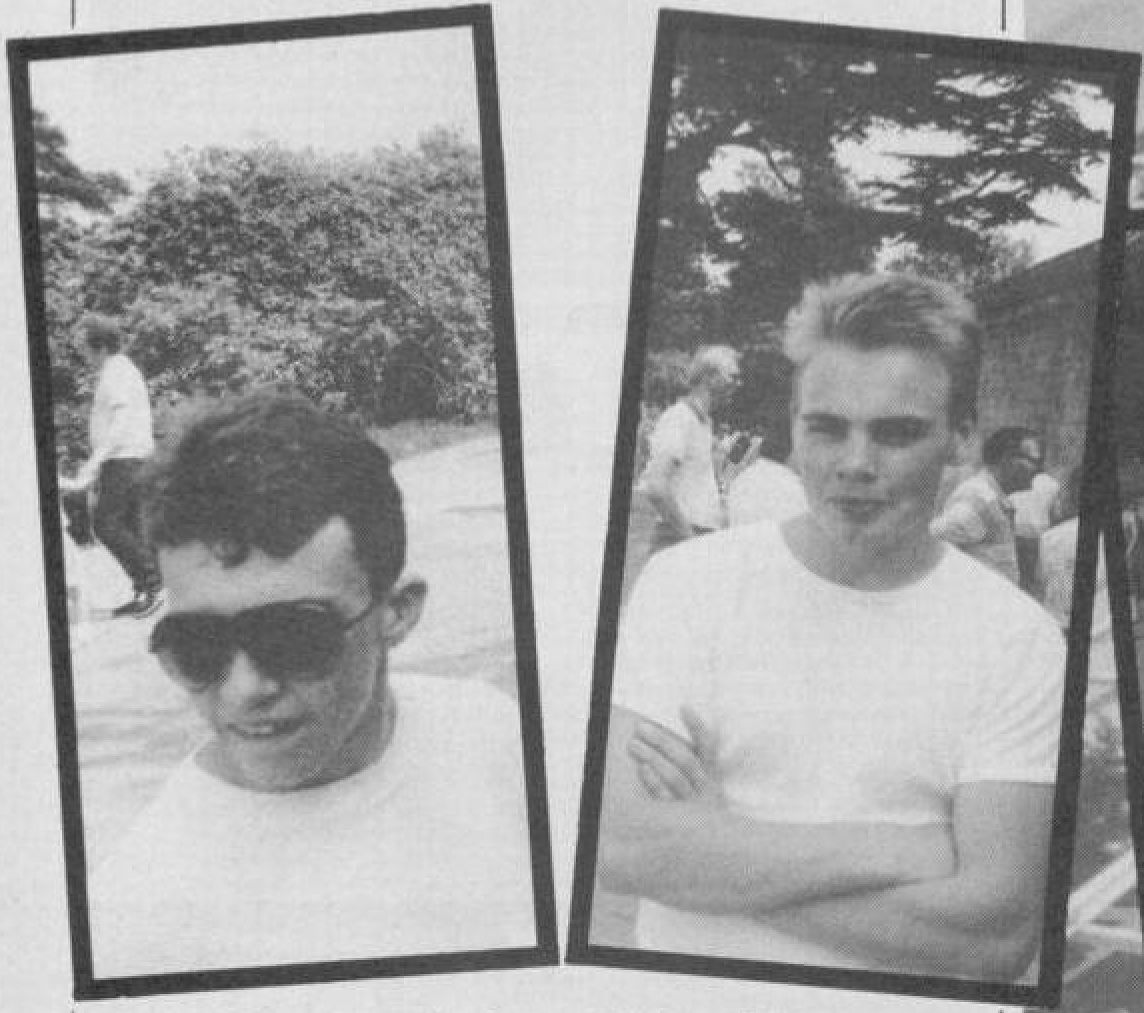
The disk version of **Firebird**'s megaselling epic *Elite* is now available for £19.95.

The version sent to us looked all very standard, but, **Firebird** being the nice people they are, designed in some nice new bugs for bug-eyed reviewers to spot. The music can't be turned back on, in certain circumstances, the fuel and rear shield level get tied together, so the rear shield won't recharge, and the save procedure is a little fraught. If the position is saved, but say the disk is full or write protected, the jolly message 'Commander Saved' comes up, even if it isn't. Oh yes, and if the game disk isn't re-inserted after saving, the game will crash when it tries to access the disk - no second chances, it just dies.

So if you want all these nice new bugs to play with, there is even an upgrade service. For £6 you can replace your fairly stable cassette version with this 'interesting' disc version. Obviously there is a big plus of fast loading of the game itself, and rapid saving and loading of the game position if you take a little care. Since all cautious commanders save their position on every docking, this obviously represents a considerable saving of time. It seems a pity **Firebird** didn't use this opportunity to expand the game with more ships, missions and on-board goodies.

THE DAY ALTON TOWERS WAS BESIEGED BY LOONIES

Towards the end of last year we ran a competition which gave two of our readers the opportunity to have a fun-packed loony day with the Manchester Mafia, better known as Design Design. After saving their pennies for many weeks they finally decided to treat the winners to a fun-packed day at Alton Towers. Editor, Malcolm Harding, swopped his briefcase for a Brownie Instamatic and tentatively tagged along to record the event. He may never be the same again!



Our ultra cool winners, Chris and Alan.

Fiona applies some suntan lotion to Ruth's red back.

Right from the start I knew I should have stayed at home. Everyone seemed intent on defying the laws of gravity and generally going on as many dangerous rides as possible, all of which was a little too dangerous for a crumbly editor. It certainly promised to be a day to remember!

The day started well enough, the sun was shining bright and I managed to end up at the wrong end of a by-pass where I was meeting the mafia men and their molls. Some high speed motoring soon rectified this minor problem and I drew up alongside the two black Astras to meet winners **Chris Harkin** and **Alan Gillespie**. Also there were **Graham Stafford**, his good lady, **Ruth**, **Simon** and **Simon**, **Fiona**, programmer, **Ian (Wook) Waring**, and **Steve Bilkes**.

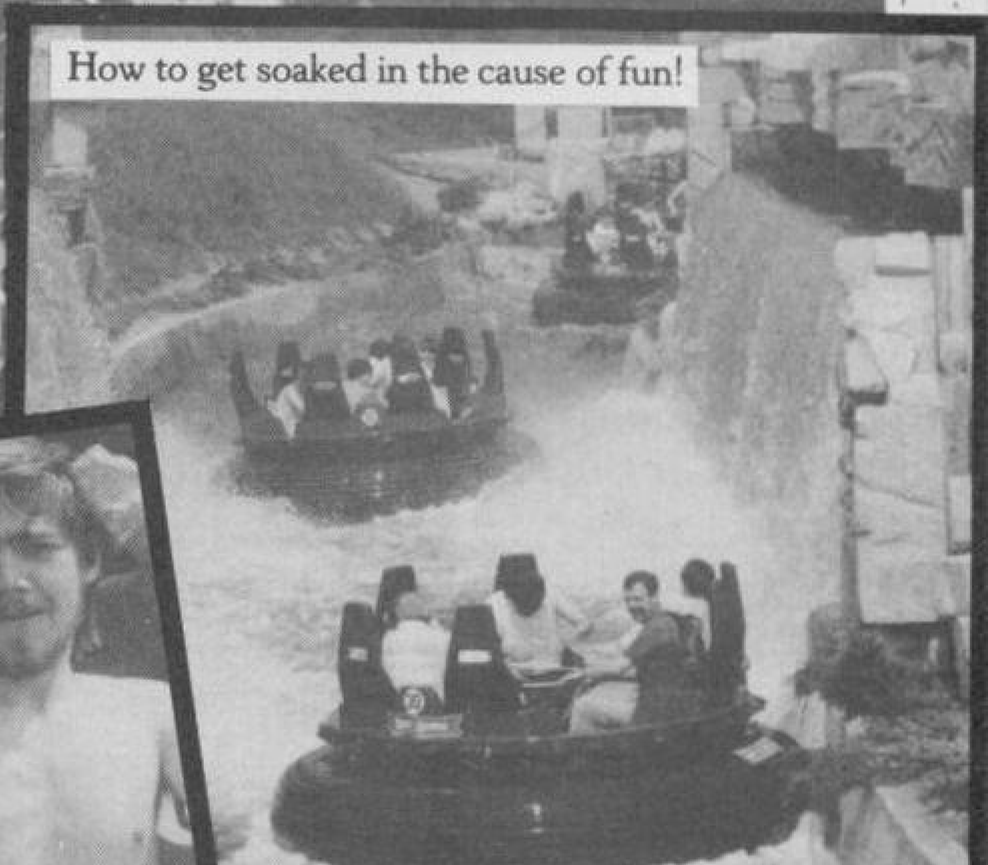
Right from the start it was evident there would be a lot of time wasted queueing up for the very popular rides so this was wisely spent devouring huge amounts of ice cream, drinks and food!

Our guests were 'game for a laugh' and were forever leading the way onto the most stomache-churning rides including the famous Corkscrew, the 1001 Nights, the Enterprise, the Waveswinger, the 4 Man Bob Rollercoaster, the Dragon Rollercoaster, Turbo Star, Black Hole, Rapids Ride and Log Flume.

All too soon it was time to go home. Surprisingly none of us had been sick, we all had suntans, and generally agreed it had been a day to remember. Over a couple of pints at a friendly hostelry we started thinking that perhaps we could make it an annual event??

Spot the spot but whose back is it?
Answers on a postcard please!

Ready for the fun, Graham, and Wook.



How to get soaked in the cause of fun!

Fiona and Simon J

Captain Stafford ready to take on the rapid's ride. Soon after he lost his glasses!

TREASURE ISLAND

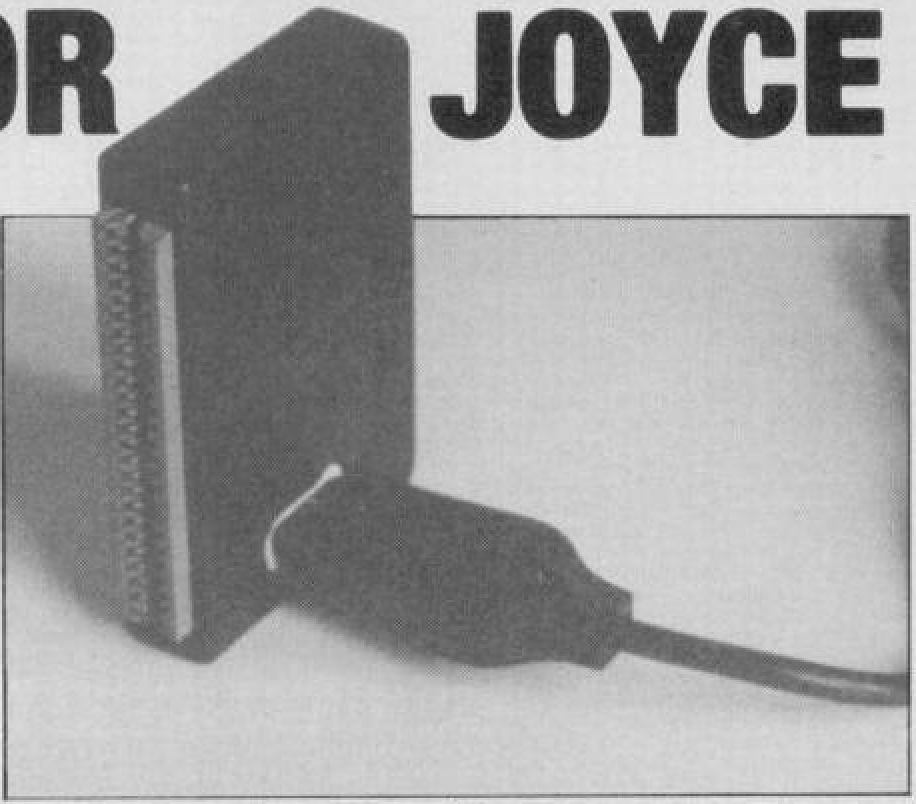
On view were some sample screen shots from a game based on the television programme *John Silver's Return to Treasure Island.* The idea of the game, not surprisingly, is Treasure Island, using the same locations and same characters but with a totally different story.

You play the part of Jim Hawkins and the idea is to find the island's hidden treasure trove. The island is reproduced in 3D and is based on the original Treasure Island maps. It works on a landscaping technique which means it draws locations as you go along according to the position of the player. Hopefully, both games will soon be reviewed in AMTIX!

ANOTHER AMSTRAD SHOW

If the crowds, the noise and the heat of the PCW show put you off, don't despair, you can go to the October Amstrad show which will be just as crowded, just as noisy, but possibly a little cooler. The show is at the Novotel (again, groan) which is the large thing you hit if you go round Hammersmith Broadway too fast. The date is October 3-5, £3 admission for adults, £2 for under 16's. **Database**, publishers of two rival Amstrad organs, who organise these jolly jambories, hope to cram 85 exhibitors into 32,000 square feet. So if you've got square feet, why not go along. It's right next to the Hammersmith tube (that's in London dummy). **Database** plan to make this a regular thing, around about once every three months.

JOY FOR JOYCE



Joyce owners are getting a joystick interface courtesy of **Cascade Games**. It plugs into the expansion port at the back, and takes a normal Atari style nine pin joystick.

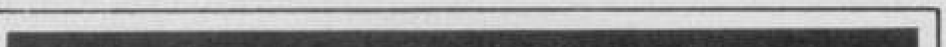
Cascade are promising a number of games for the Joyce which use the new interface, bundled with the interface comes a joystick compatible version of **CDS**'s *Colossus Chess.* Cascade hope to conclude similar deals with other software houses to include joystick compatibility in their games. This will probably include the Joyce version of the hit shoot-em-up *Skyfox* from **Ariolasoft**.

Cascade itself intends to release further conversions of its range of computer adaptions of board games which it believes should be suitable for the sort of games market the Joyce opens up. According to John Lewis of **Cascade**, *'there are many people who still don't realise the games playing potential of the machine they have bought, we hope this sort of game will appeal to them.' The interface plugs on to the expansion port at the rear of the machine, so owners with the Amstrad interface will have to disconnect this to plug in the interface. The interface and bundled software will cost £29.95.*

THIS MEANS WAR

Due out real soon now is *WAR* from **Martech**. Bearing more than a superficial resemblance to **Hewson**'s *Uridium*, a space ship flies along over a huge alien space ship, blasting up the surface defences of the ship, whilst being attacked by wave after wave of fighters. Having smacked up enough of the ship, the screen changes colour, and the ship must be moved to the end of the ship. Then there is a separate screen where the idea is to shoot moving squares of a particular, random, colour.

Perhaps all this might seem old hat to the Commodore owner, but on the Amstrad, which probably will never see a version of *Uridium*, at least for the foreseeable future, this could be a good second best.



MARTIAL ARTS FROM MARTECH

The latest game from **Martech**, *Uchi Mata* is a judo-orientated martial arts game. The game is being converted to the Amstrad by Chris Fayers who was responsible for *Zoids* and it has the full backing of the British Judo Association and also black belt Judo man, Brian Jacks.

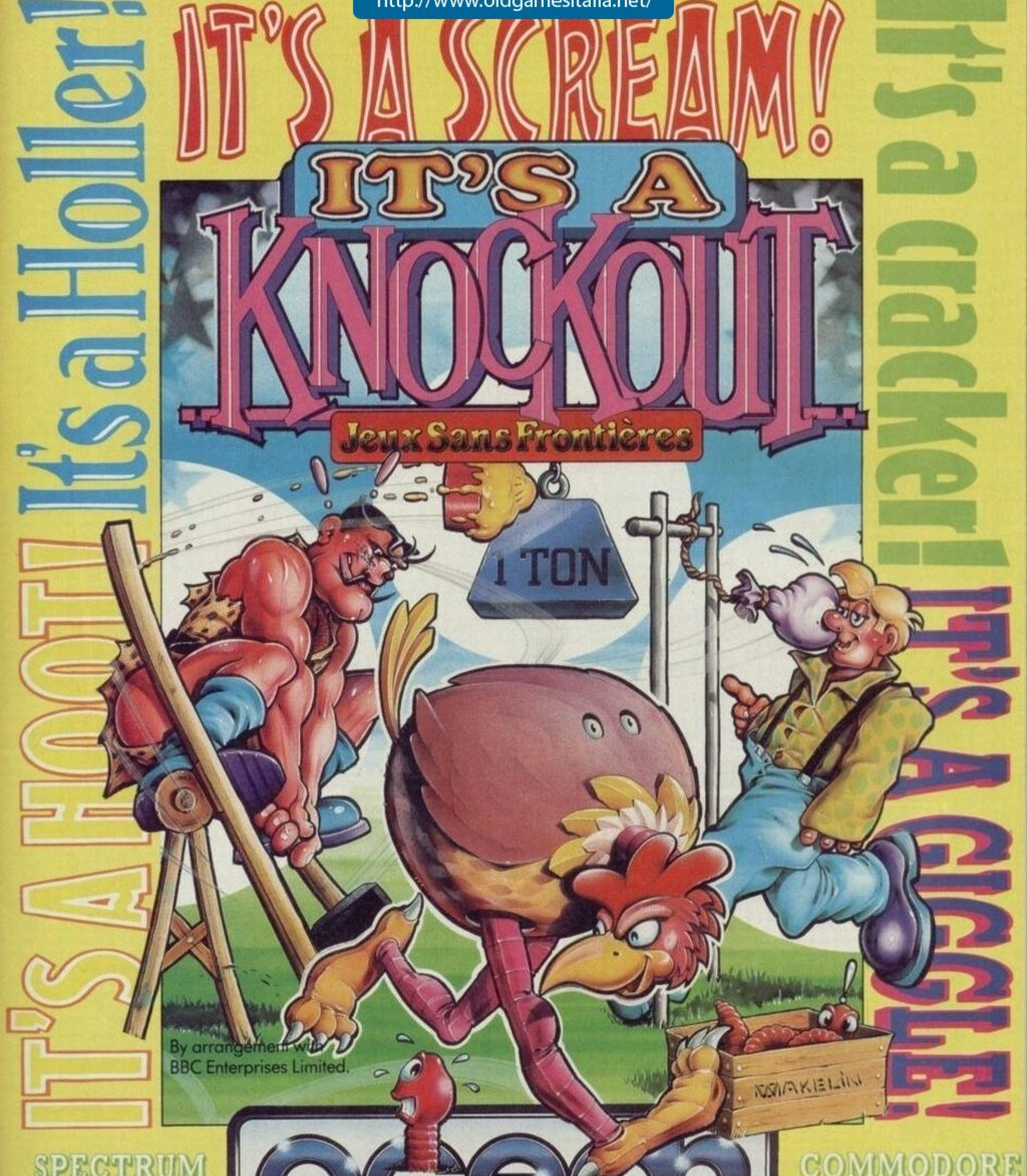
Uchi Mata is one of the throws in judo and the game can be played either as a two player game, using joysticks, or as a one player game against the computer. There are 40 different graphic sequences. The game will be shown off at the PCW Show and will; cost £8.95 on cassette and a further £5 for the disk version.

TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN

One of the latest offerings from **Design Design** is *Taking Tiger Mountain.* According to the two Simons the odds are well and truly stacked against you in this deep space battle.

You need real skill and stategical ability when you drop your weapon-laden and heavily armoured attack tank onto the dusty surface of Beta Lyrae 3 and set off to put the boot in against the dreaded Magellan control bunker, built on the site of the once very beautiful Tiger Mountain.

The Magellans are no ludo players, they're very mean. They have planted mines all over the place and they do a nice line in pernicious missiles. Their defending tanks and anti-tank guns will also do their best to wipe you off the face of the planet. *Taking Tiger Mountain* is a gem you will enjoy getting to grips with, a full high resolution display, with fast 3-D vector graphics and extra information appearing in head up displays, maintained in real time and superimposed overe the main display.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It's a cracker!
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KNIGHT TYME

Mastertronic Added Dimension, £2.99 cass

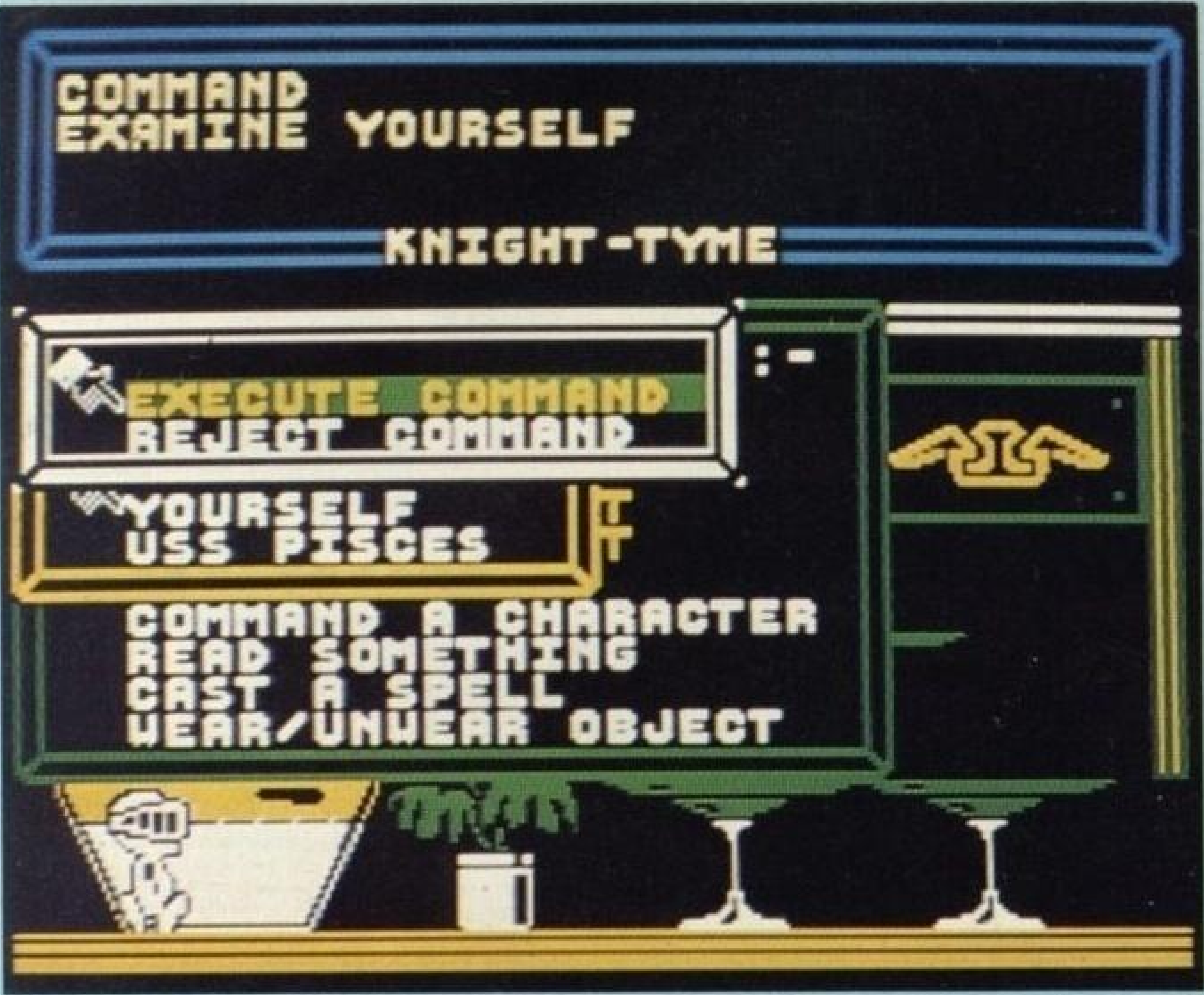
Knight Tyme
MAD
GAMES

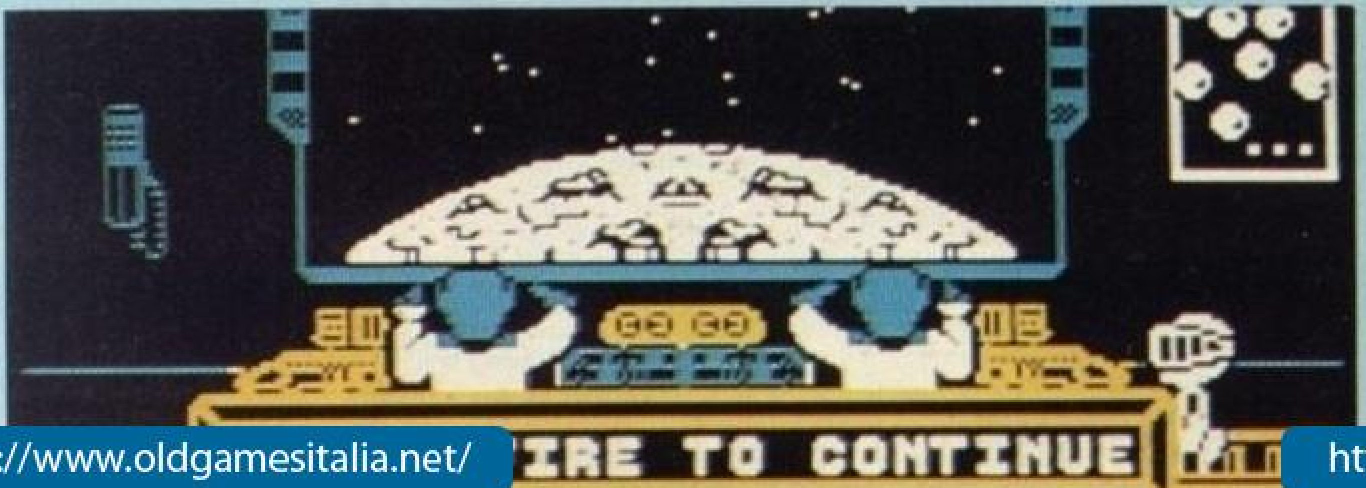
Our ol' mate, Magic Knight, charges back to our screens this month in the long awaited *Knight Tyme*. Magic Knight has now left Medieval England by a freak White Out spell cast by Gimbal and he has been catapulted through time and space on to the Transporter pad of the USS Pisces. Now, as you might suppose, Magic Knight feels a bit out of place what with being dressed up in a suit of armour in the middle of a futuristic space ship but, luckily, he already has a Cloak of Invisibility with which he can hide himself from the other occupants of the Pisces and so begin his quest. So, there he is, standing on the transporter pad like a right plonker, when who should come along but an alien who introduces himself as Klink. Klink is a nice sort of chap and reveals the nature of MK's quest. MK has to escape from the 25th century and return to his proper time and place, medieval England. To do this he will have to locate the Tyme Guardians and obtain a Tyme Machine from them, before he can embark on all this he must make contact with the Pisces transputer, Derby IV.

Knight Tyme features Windowmation that first made it's appearance in *Spellbound*, it now features a lot more sub windows making the game very flexible and interactive. With all this knowledge Magic Knight can, at last, begin the quest to recover the missing parts of the time machine. The problems begin when MK can't get any response from the other members of the Pisces' crew, you see without their co-operation you can't take the Pisces to the relevant planets to complete the quest. Officially MK is a stow away on board, and so can't afford to reveal his presence to Gordon and Sarab, the pilots of the Pisces, without getting thrown of the ship.

Problems, problems, what can MK do?. Well for a start he could try and wangle a ID card from Derby IV, but for that he needs a valid photograph, which has to be taken by S3 E3, the onboard photography robot, but for a photograph he needs some film, which Gordon has and he can't ask Gordon without revealing his identity. Oh dear!

The rest of the occupants on board Pisces are, luckily, a messy bunch and litter the ship with assorted bits and pieces which prove very helpful in your problem solving. However, it's not all problem solving, there is also a fair amount of strategy involved. You have you keep a careful eye on MK to make sure he doesn't run out of strength and die, also keep an eye on Gordon — he has a nasty tendency to fall asleep in mid flight, so keep him pumped with vitamins as well. Are you Magic enough to solve the quest and discover what goes bump in the Knight? Play it and see!

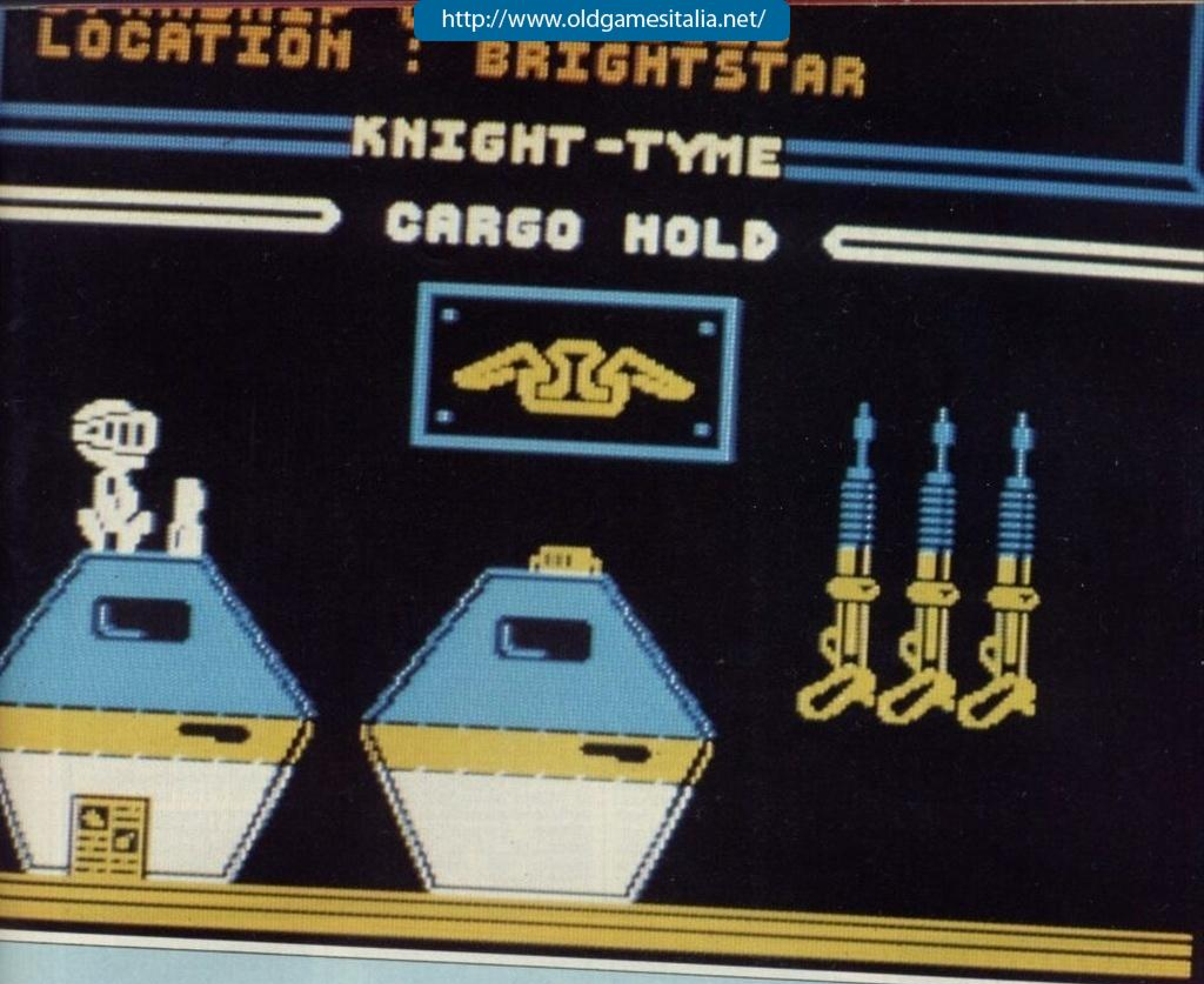




KNIGHT TYME INTRO HINTS

Now, some of us here at Amtix! Towers are a bit worried that you all might give up on this game before you get into it, so, out of the kindness of our hearts, we have decided to give you help with the very early stage in the solution of the quest.

First off, you can drop Gadget X, it serves no purpose at all, then pick up the mirror. Poddle over to the bridge and take the instant film from Gordon and the Mc Tablet from Sarab. Cast a Fortify Yourself spell; this will give you energy. Now go to the recreation area and pick up the camera. Give the camera and film to SE 3E. Unwear your Cloak of Invisibility and give it to Gordon for safe keeping. Command SE 3E to help and he will take your picture. Now go to Derby IV and command him to help. Derby IV will give you a blank ID



card. To get it authorised go to SE 3E and take the pot of glue, this automatically sticks your photo to the ID card. Now wear it. The next thing to do is to give the Starmap and tankard to Gordon, this will help you to travel from planet to planet, but we are not going to tell you how to do it. Hah!. Maybe Julian will help you struggling Knights out next month.

CRITICISM

1 **This has just gotta be the ultimate arcade adventure for the Amstrad. The graphics, the music, the playability! There are just not enough superlatives to described the magnificence of this game. However, (Yes, there's a but . . .) this could prove a little difficult to get into but once you have cracked the opening puzzles then you're away and there is nothing to stop you. Sorry, but I have nothing but praise for this game and at three quid it is a must. Get it NOW!**

2 I was a great fan of *Spellbound* but found *Knight Tyme* was of much higher standard than even that epic. The music was up to the usual standard, very medieval overtones, which adds to the atmosphere that the graphics of the program already portray. An arcade adventure freak's bread and butter.

3 *There is probably little new under the sun of arcade adventures, and as the genre goes, this isn't a bad effort. As ever, the solutions to the various 'puzzles' are wilfully obscure and will have most arcade fans pulling their hair out by the handful. But, for the terminally braindead, willing to spend an entire evening trying to work out which objects they have to give to whom, and do what with the widget and drop the thingy, this is quite an amusing little game. The humour and the atmosphere are all quite nice, and I suppose if any game is going to have me sodding around with silly quark bombs and instant cameras, this might just be the one. The icon driven menu approach makes it tolerably playable, and I nearly chuckled once.*

Presentation 91%
Excellent implementation of windowmation and clues.

Graphics 92%
Generally well defined with some excellent effects.

Sound 90%
Jolly tune throughout.

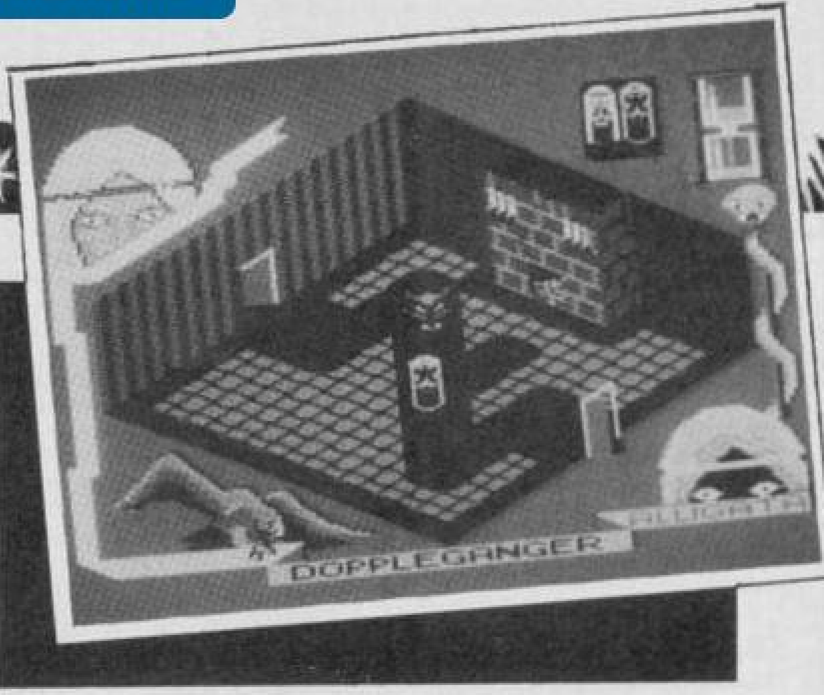
Playability 92%
Once you're in you're hooked.

Addictive qualities 93%
The puzzles just keep on coming.

Value for money 96%
At £3.00 it's the best possible.

Overall 93%
An arcade adventurer's sheer delight.

AN AMTIX! ACCOLADE



DOPPLEGANGER

Americana £2.99

Life as a Sorceress is not easy, no, by golly, especially when you have a naughty alter ego that insists on helping out with your tasks. Your quest takes place in a mystic castle inhabited, naturally enough, by a variety of nasties who are intent on making your life difficult. What the Sorceress has to do in her quest is to roam the castle in search of gold, silver and bronze ingots and bring them back to the room that she began in, the west battlements. However, as a player, you not only control the Sorceress herself, you also have to contend with her Alter Ego, who you have to guide around as she assists the Sorceress in the quest.

She is essential if you are to find a way to explore all 25 rooms (it's a small castle you know) as there are a variety of doors and not all can be accessed by one single character. The Sorceress can only move through blue framed doors, and her Alter Ego can only go through green framed doors. However, both can move through doors with white frames and, as long as they have the correct coloured key, they can travel through individually coloured doors.

Richard

CRITICISM

This game was originally released by Alligata and I remember being impressed by the graphics then, and by today's standards they're not all that bad. Unfortunately the playability is still pretty bad and lets the game down substantially, which is a pity. At £2.99 it might be worth it for a way to spend a boring day, but otherwise it's nothing special.

The playing area is dipicted in a very colourful 3D display and also shows your time which is represented by sand falling through an hourglass, which runs out very quickly, and once gone that's the end of the game. Contact with nasties depletes your time, this you can't fail to notice as the colours flash and there is a lot of bleeping, in disgust no doubt. Nasties can, however, be dealt with, the spiders can be killed outright by 'shielding' yourself. There is also a Gorgon which can be blasted if you can remember the myth. As before there is only one life which is odd really when you have two characters that work independently, but there you go, such is the life of a Sorceress.

Lee

CRITICISM

Nice graphics, shame about the game. let's face it, you can't expect too much from a budget label. Looked at this way, this game ain't so bad. Patience and an ability to admire the scenery whilst doing very little is obviously an advantage here. Some of the puzzles are a little intriguing, but in most cases the paucity of objects means that it is fairly obvious what to do. The shotgun approach usually works, get all the objects together and something's bound to work.

Presentation 64%
Colourful packaging and usual Americana lay-out.

Graphics 60%
Colourful but very simple.

Sound 40%
A quaint ditty at the start then just spot FX.

Playability 38%
Control is quite difficult.

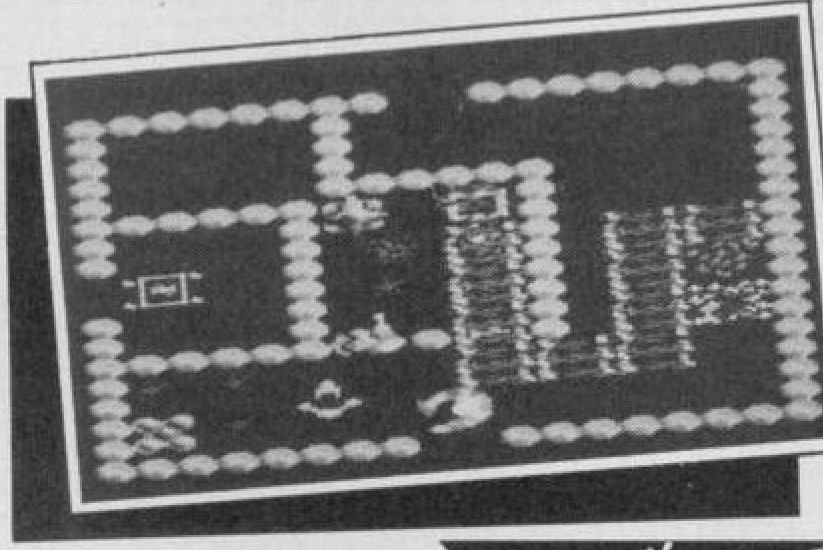
Addictive qualities 35%
An insomniac's dream!

Value for money 58%
For £2.99 it's not bad..

Overall 51%
. . . but not that good either more ike a Black Hole surrounded by a non event.

STORM

Mastertronics £1.99 cass



Life isn't easy for your average super hero. While you're off busy righting wrongs, defending truth, liberty and justice, some bounder has come along and made off with the old lady.

The foul Una Cum (for it is he) has taken Storm's wife off to his lair. So Storm, pausing only to enlist the aid of his old chum, Agravian Undead, hotfoots it over to the lair.

The game starts with our two brave chums at the entrance to Una's lair. Una has wisely made himself scarce (making off with Superhero's wives isn't good for your life expectancy), but has left behind his evil minions to do his dirty work. The player must collect three broaches scattered around the place to complete the quest.

The game consists of the usual room plus doors set up, viewed from above. Each room contains the odd bit of furniture, diverse objects ranging from food to armour to scrolls. There may also be several meanie generators. These generate meanies until you shoot them — a good move as it then allows you to explore the room in peace. The game can be played by one or two players — both using the keyboard. The two player game is a lot easier, as obviously the meanies can be disposed of far quicker — some rooms can be almost impossible in one player mode — the meanies are generated as fast as you can kill them.

Some objects in the rooms — Cabbalas — change the layout of the rooms, so obviously it is a good idea to make a map and know what each Cabbala does.

Paul

CRITICISM

I suppose it had to happen eventually, someone had to hook on to the arcade game, GAUNTLET. What we have here is a very poor copy. The graphics are of the sort seen on most of the Amsoft games — lots of big colourful characters, but lots of problems when anybody gets near anybody else. The movement of the characters is too much on the slow side for my liking, and reaction of the computer when you turn around is much too fast, and quite often I found my self constantly going around in circles. I didn't really feel that STORM was any more impressive than all the other arcade adventures on the market.

Anthony

CRITICISM

It's good to see the odd two player game knocking around. There is nothing quite as dull as sitting around waiting for your turn at a game. The graphics are colourful, although at times a shade confusing. On some screens, parts of the layout are obscured, so working out what is happening when you are in this part of the screen is tricky. This is not helped by the controls which are rather oversensitive. All this colour, combined with large numbers of baddies (at times) and two players moving around can lead to total confusion. Sound could be a lot better, but then this is a budget game and could produce an afternoon's worth of harmless fun.

Presentation 53%
The usual nice packaging with screen shots and artwork.

Graphics 63%
Colourful but confusing at times.

Sound 33%
Not much at all, just the odd squelchy spot effect.

Playability 35%
Controls are too sensitive, screen can get cluttered.

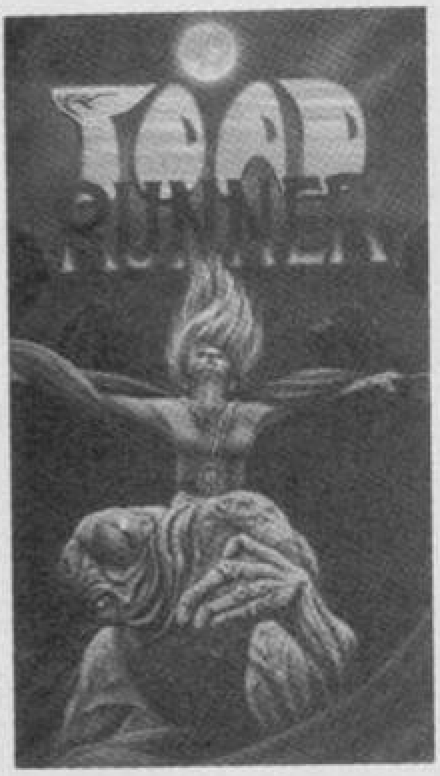
Addictive qualities 37%
Good fun, but not that rivetting.

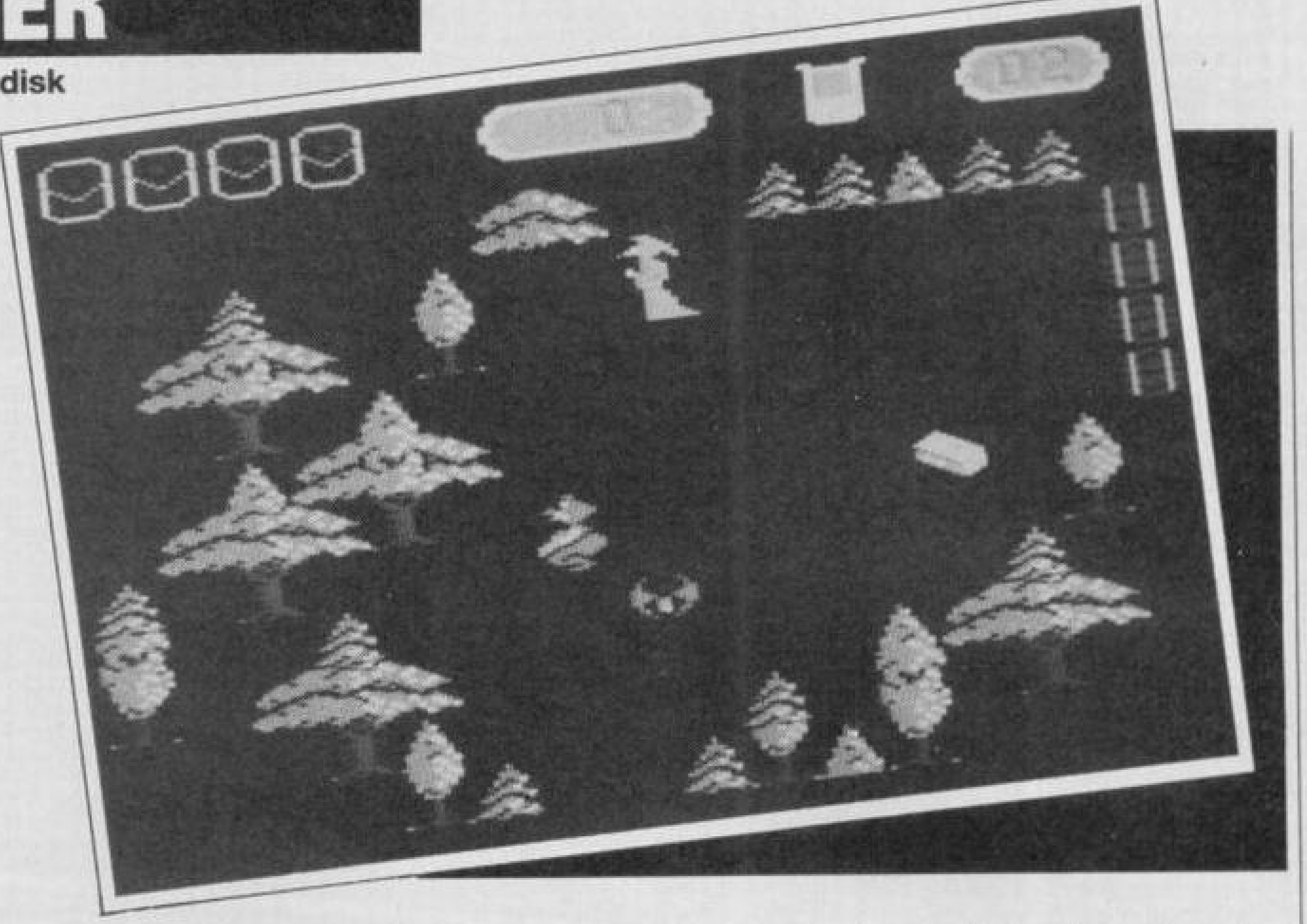
Value for money 59%
Another good budget title.

Overall 59%
Another best seller at the garages and newsagents.

TOADRUNNER

Ariolasoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk





In this game, the latest program from Ariolasoft, the computer is cast as a wicked witch that has turned a prince into a toad, and, surprise surprise, you play the toad.

Toadrunner is an arcade adventure of the standard— collect objects and use them in certain rooms to achieve some goal—type. To find a Princess is the aim so that the frog may return to the human form it once had. No fairytale explanation is given as to why somebody had the prince undergo such an unfortunate metamorphosis in the first place.

The instructions are clear and interesting to read, but not too long to be boring. They outline all the elements of the game and give additional information on how things, like the Thief, act. The game can be played using the keyboard, which can be redefined, or joystick to control the frog.

Lee

CRITICISM

Arcade adventures are very much an acquired taste. Fans of the Mikro-Gen Wally games will enjoy trying to work out the solutions to all the puzzles. The lighthearted tone is nice, and this humour is followed through in the solution to many of the puzzles. There are lots of puzzles, and even when you've solved them, trying to dash round and complete them in the time allowed will sustain interest. The program was really far too fussy about picking up objects and where you have to be standing to use them. It's hard enough working out which objects to use without making the player believe he's got the wrong objects because he's using them in the wrong place.

Richard

CRITICISM

Hmmm . . . This is a bit of a wierd game. The graphics are all very nice and colourful but the way they move is perverted to say the least. Every character has its own little frames of animation and they are all very smooth, the screen is very colourful with all the graphics very neatly animated. I thought the instructions were a bit on the weak side and didn't help much in completing the game. It is quite playable but I couldn't find much in it to keep me going for long. Overall we have another arcade/strategy game that is verging on the boring.

The graphics for the rooms are large and pleasant to look at and are not too repetitive in layout. The graphics for the frog, the objects and the nasties are large, colourful, well defined and move smoothly about the screen and with reasonable speed. Little use has been made of sound. There is no tune of any kind and limited sound effects are used only for the single flying monster in each room.

The frog has four pockets that can hold one object each. Items may be placed in a pocket or dropped by pressing one of the number of the pockets to be filled or emptied. The object in pocket four can be used to marmalise a nastie that is blocking froggy's path, this may mean the demise of the monster or just moving it out of the way. There are times when pocket three needs to hold a particular object as some nasties require more than one object to effect them.

The map is logically set out and there are no one-way connections between rooms. The objects needed to defeat a particular nastie are not always obvious, but in general it takes little thought to find the right answer. Some objects are used several times while others can only be used once. Having decided which objects are required to deal with a monster, the frog must find the necessary position around the monster to move it so he may pass. There is often only one position on the screen that will enable you to move the nastie, and this must be found by trial-and-error tactics. Standing by walls or particular rocks is the kind of position markers you need to try and find.

Paul

CRITICISM

TOADRUNNER is well produced and looks very good during play. The idea of the game is easy to understand but is very frustrating because of its requirement that you must be very precise with positioning and this is really the only drawback to the game. All in all it is good fun.

In some rooms there are three exits leading in the same direction. Two of these exits are blocked by a form of death, scorpions for example, in the room they lead to. The remaining exit is the safe one. Each time the frog enters the room the exits are randomly mixed up, but to aid froggie's decision on which exit gives safe passage, there is a stone or flower that changes shape to signify the right way to turn. First the particular rock should be recognised and then a link between its shape and the safe exit must be spotted.

A thief appears at times to steal objects that are lying about in the room. If he picks up an object needed for the next problem then the frog must wait until it is dropped. This is an inconvenience but is more a hindrance to movement and life.

Presentation 71%
Lovely artwork — nothing to do with the game.

Graphics 72%
Nice animation and lots of colour.

Sound 20%
Boring spot FX which didn't sound much at all.

Playability 38%
Tricky puzzles, awkward positioning.

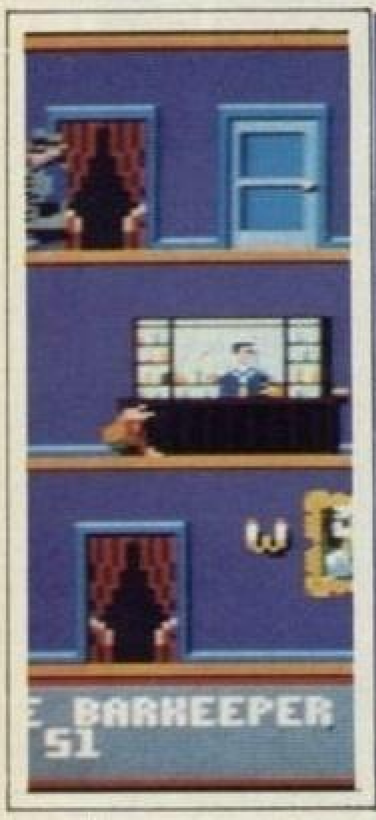
Addictive qualities 53%
For the addict.

Value for money 68%
Lots of puzzles, and toughies at that.

Overall 65%
Arcade adventure fans only.

MISSION ELEVATOR

Micropool, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys.



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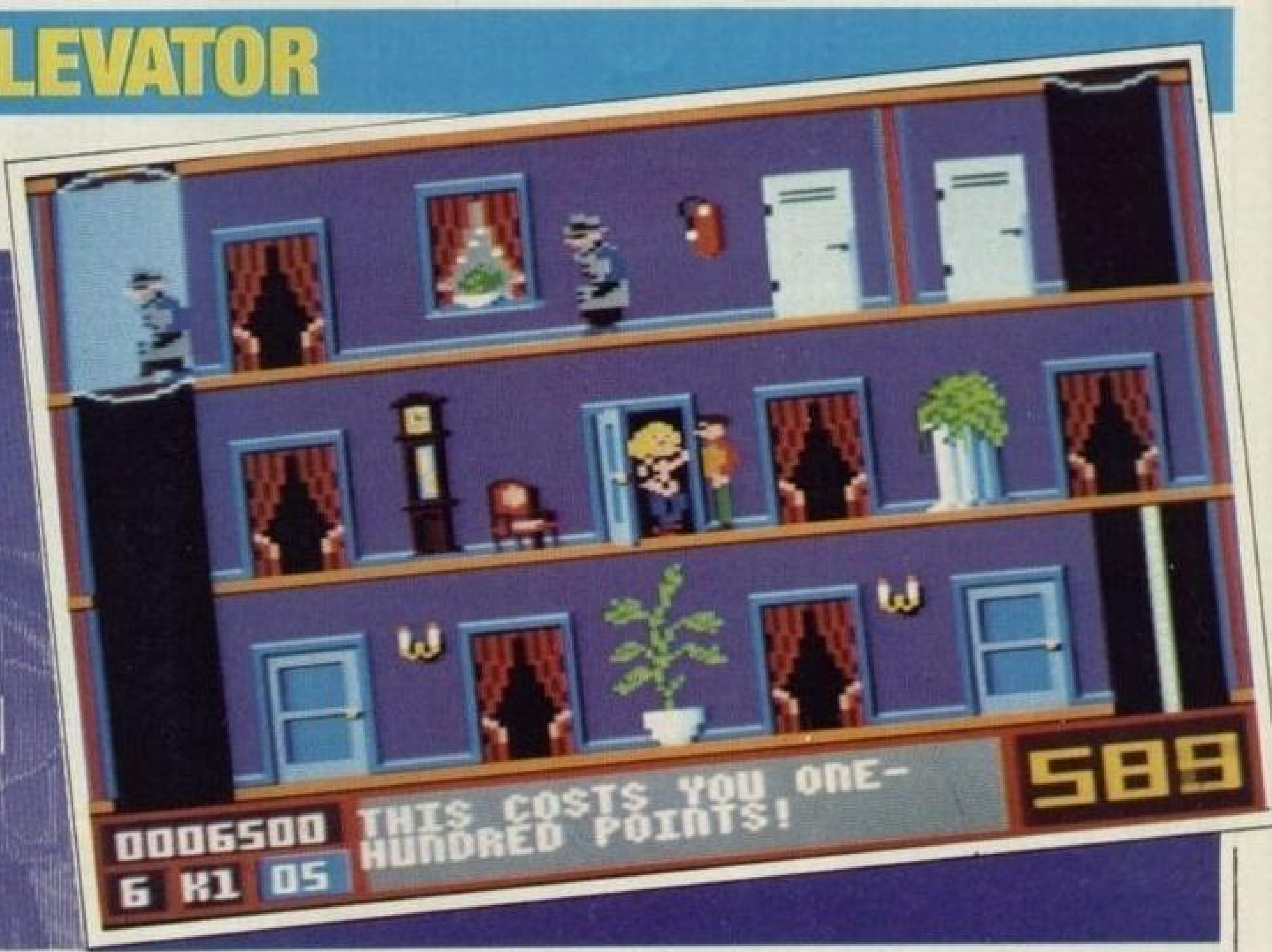

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There's a special announcement from Headquarters: a difficult and dangerous mission exists. We need a strong, tough and intelligent guy for this work. Inform the headquarters if you think you are the right one.

Well, are you man enough to take on this laborious mission?. Don't worry it's not in a run down alley or anything like that. No, when the FBI set up a HQ they do it in style, in a well furnished hotel. However, all is not well down at the hotel. The place has been infiltrated and is now overrun by Secret Service agents, you have to enter the hotel and defeat the lot of them, single handedly. You see, these SS blokies have gone and planted a bomb in the hotel and if you don't defuse it by the given deadline then, kaboom, the whole place goes up in smoke.

The hotel consists of sixty two floors, split into eight levels. It is possible to travel around a section of eight floors by using the lifts which are in abundance. To get to the next section of eight floors you must go through the emergency exit. However, to achieve entry through one of these emergency exits, you must first perform two tasks. Firstly you must find a key which will open all the blue doors; from there you must search the doors to find a porter, who will happily give you a key to the emergency exits and so helping you achieve entry onto the next level. Unfortunately, the porter is not behind every door, no, sometimes there is an enemy agent or, if you're lucky, a woman will open the door and remove her clothes, doing this costs you one hundred points.(Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, say n'more)

Lee — CRITICISM

What appears a quite harmless arcade adventure is in fact a very tough shoot-em-up as well. It becomes very addictive because of all the neat little touches, such as the fire extinguisher and the woman behind the door, which makes you just keep on wanting to explore every possibility. Overall it's a very enjoyable game with a great deal to offer adventurers and arcade fanatics.

Richard — CRITICISM

I am sorry to say I am completely addicted to this game, and what a dinky shoot'em up it is too! I found it so enjoyable to play because of the additional touches. Such things as the game of dice in which you could win or lose money and the bar man who offers you a drink and laughs if you select milk. If you choose whisky the joystick controls are reversed making life a little more difficult. When you feel you can't carry on why not stick your fingers in the socket and go up in a flash of electrical light. Overall a very addictive game, but make no mistake, it gets increasingly difficult to dodge the bullets. Will you be able to rise to occasion of MISSION ELEVATOR?

There are also lots of other great little doobries around the place, for which you can search. There are things you can bend down and examine. If you look at the fire extinguisher you can put out all the lights, so you'll need to find a match box to light the candles, if you want to see again. You may come across a small table on which you can play a game of dice, or you can get extremely drunk at the bar providing you have found the money, this extracts a piece of code from the barman. To stop the countdown of the detonator you will need to find the whole code which consists of sixteen parts, two parts can be found on each section of eight floors. Each part of the code specifies a direction and they are given in a strict order and they must be remembered in that order.

Paul — CRITICISM

The first time I loaded this one up, I thought 'not another arcade adventure', but as I played it, I realised that this was far more in the IMPOSSIBLE MISSION mould. It was a little tedious to have to search everything for the passwords, just making your way up the building is hard enough. None of us managed to get much further than the first section or so, so its going to be a real toughy. The graphics are very good. It's amazing how pretty the small mode 0 graphics are, and the animation is good too. Joystick control is a slight problem, most of the time you fire from the crouching position, and if you move the joystick at the same time, this searches the object you are in front of— pressing the space bar might have been a better method.

Our hero can perform several feats of acrobatics including flying kicks, ducking (especially useful when avoiding bullets from the enemy agents), shooting and, of course, standard movements of left and right. Opening doors and general examination of objects is achieved by pressing down and left/right, and to open a door you'll need to position yourself by the door frame. By the way, our hero is called Trevor. Trevor?. What a name for a super spy!.

Presentation 77%
Good, lots of on screen information.

Graphics 88%
Well defined and very jolly.

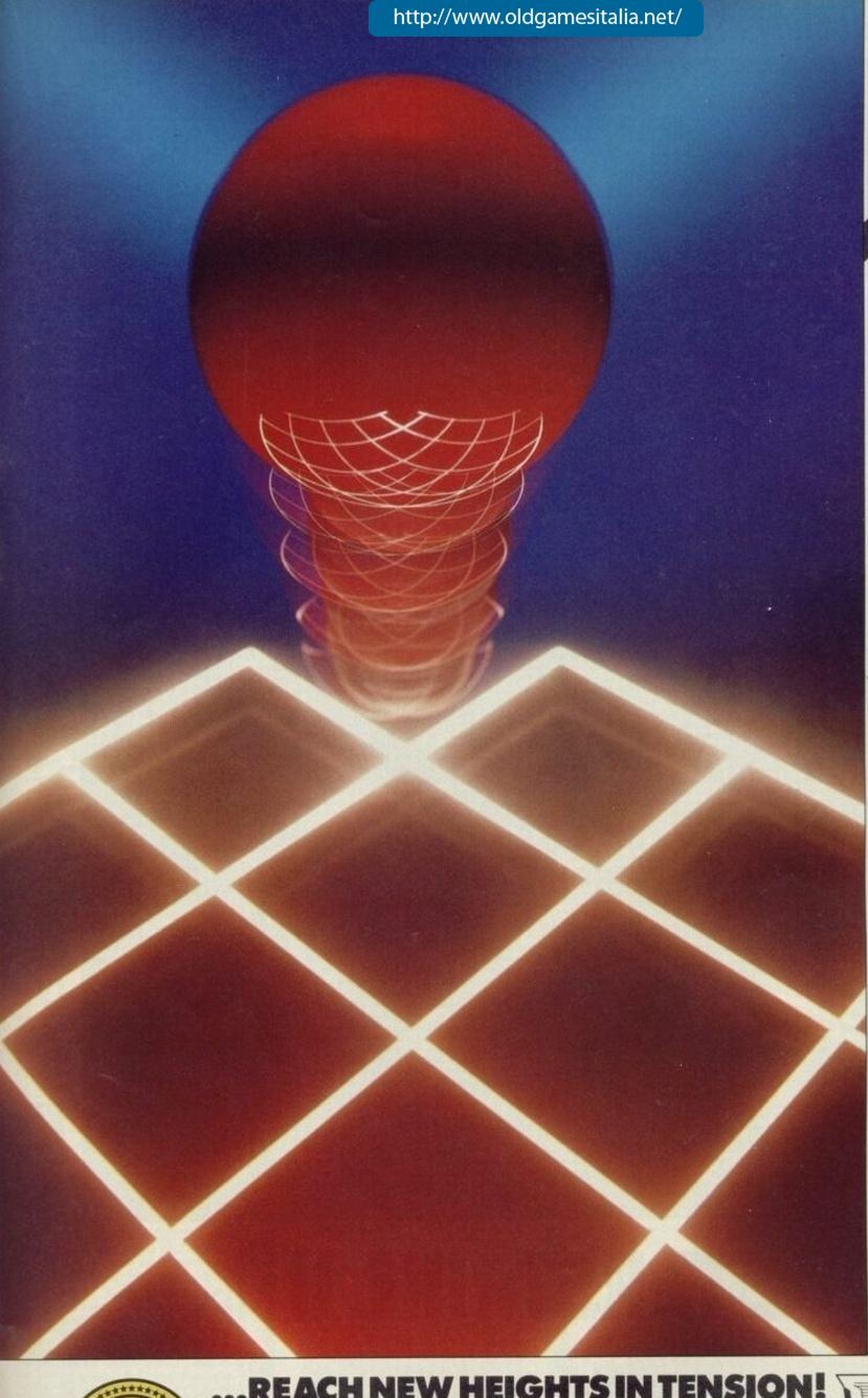
Sound 66%
Not much of it, but some good blasting sounds.

Playability 85%
Excellent, especially the little extras!.

Addictive qualities 88%
Initial compulsion to explore all the floors.

Value for money 80%
For what it offers it's fair, just!

Overall 85%
If international espionage is your thing, then this is for you.



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EYE SPY

Americana Software,
£2.99 cass
joystick or keys

Hoppity, hoppity, sproing, spring, bounce. *Eye Spy* features the latest software cutie to hit the Amstrad, named The Thing (without Spring), he bounds merrily around a maze of platformed screens with the ultimate objective of breaking into all the safes, stealing plans and other secret stuff and returning to HQ. You see, Thing is but a poor overworked and underpaid minion at Police HQ, but if he can successfully break into all the safes he can rise through the ranks of Constable, Sergeant, Inspector, Chief Inspector and finally become Commissioner. To assist Thing as he boings around the screens are some lifts, in the form of baskets which are pulled up and down, however if he fails to get off at the right point he is either crushed to death at the top or burnt to a cinder in the boiler room at the bottom.

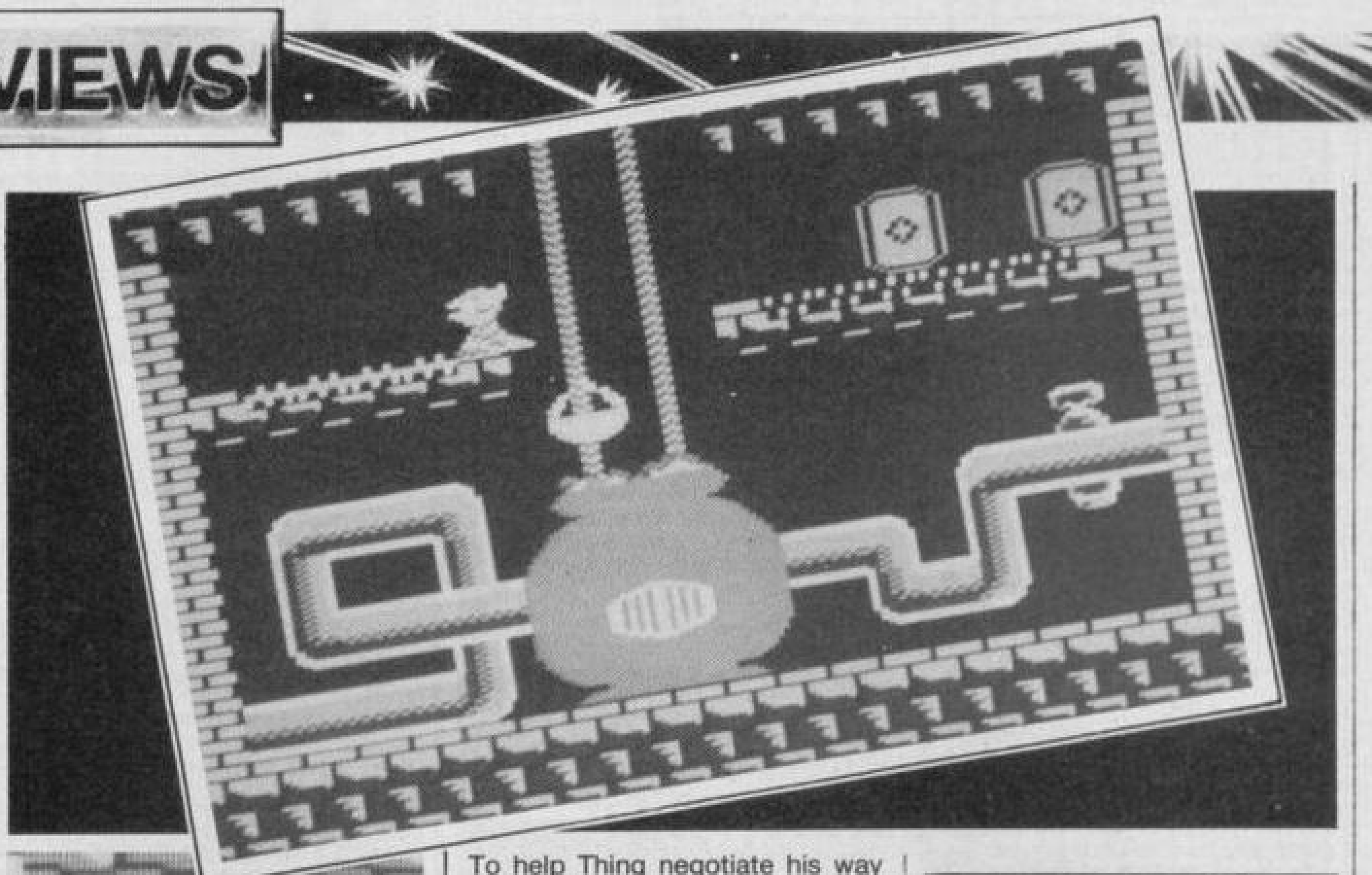
Paul — **CRITICISM**

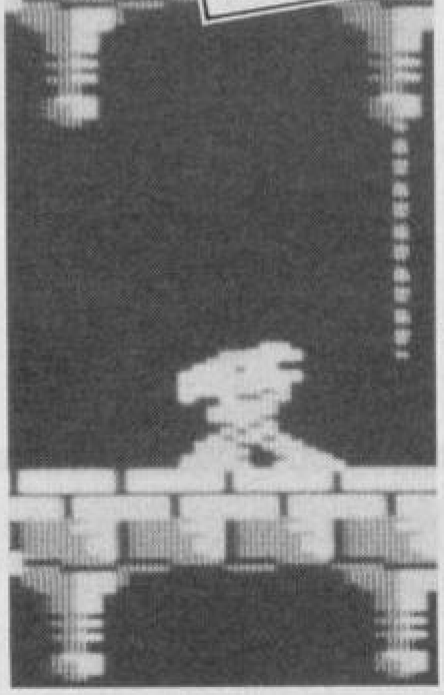
Although the graphics are poor and flickery, this game is fun to play and quite addictive. The majority of the screens are easy to complete but some may just cause you some problems. On a lot of the screens, you are supplied with a network map of the playing area similar to Impossible Mission, but you don't have to go through a screen for it to appear which is helpful. In fact this is quite a good game that will give hours of enjoyment but once completed it may lose its appeal.

There are, as always, nasties who try to make your life a misery, although they don't physically kill you they will deplete your energy considerably. Luckily, if Thing can make it through the swimming pool, complete with rubber duck 'n' all, he can return to the Police Station and recharge his energy.

Lee — **CRITICISM**

As much as I hate to say it, Thing is cute. Yeuch!. For £2.99 the game is well worth a look at if only for its cuteness. It is also very playable, except when Thing keeps getting drowned in the swimming pool. There is a cheerful tune which plays along side the game and the introduction screen, which shows Thing in all manner of poses, makes it all worth while. This game is little more than a good giggle and I have no reservations in recommending it to anyone who is feeling down in the dumps.





To help Thing negotiate his way around there is an on screen map, which is displayed on all the platformed screens, along with measures of Thing's remaining energy and time. Are you Thing enough to become Commissioner?.

Richard — **CRITICISM**

As my fish-like doobrie bounced and jumped around all the screens, I found it a jolly game to play. At first I couldn't really say I got into the game, but after quite a little practice I got the feel of it. The lovely tune playing throughout the game plus the big bold sprites mixed well together. As platform games go, this is a fine effort by Americana. It's good value for money. It's a fun game to play and if you have got the money, go and get it!

Presentation 74%
Great title screen showing all Thing's poses.

Graphics 73%
Extremely jolly and bouncy.

Sound 81%
A super ditty burbles it's way throughout.

Playability 81%
Very easy to get into . . .

Addictive 80%
. . . with lots of neat puzzles to keep you playing.

Value for money 84%
You could do a lot worse for three quid.

Overall 81%
Probably Americana's best, to date.

BLOCKBUSTERS

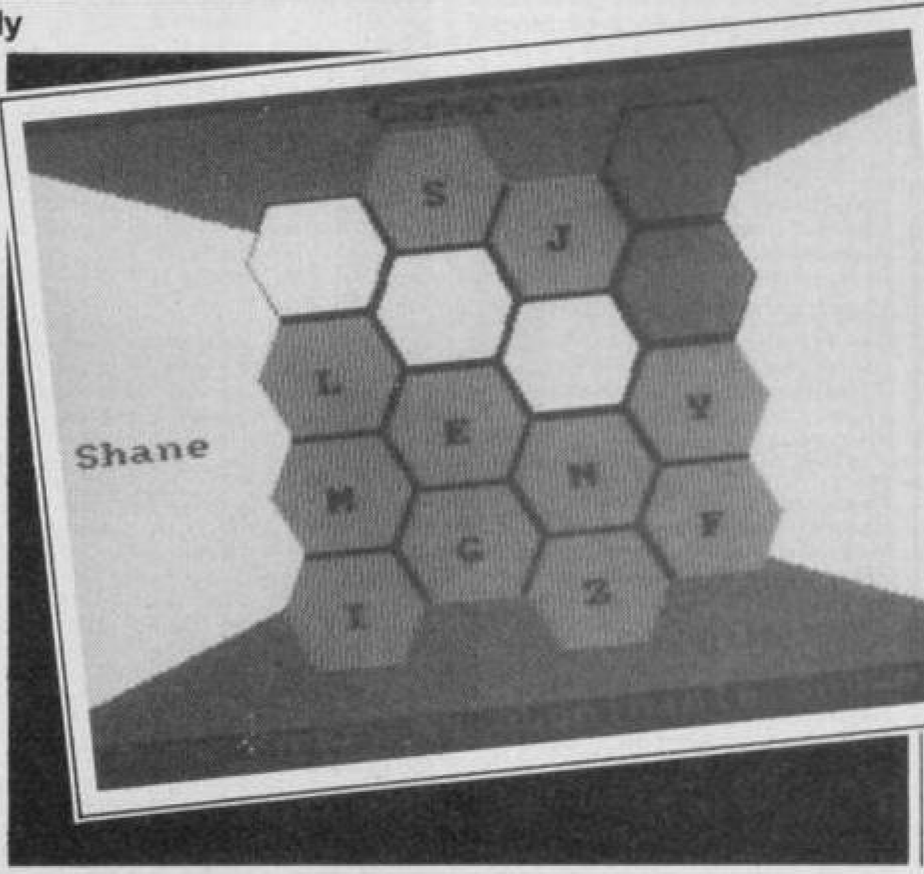
Macsen £8.95 cass keys only

Blockbusters obviously originates from the telly programme and has now been converted on to the smaller screen. It is a two player game and based on a simple four by four matrix of hexagons.

When loaded the computer gives a green screen option, following that you can choose to have sound, the number of

Paul — **CRITICISM**

BLOCKBUSTERS is probably the best T V quiz game yet put on the computer. Although it isn't the most interesting game to play, it is well presented with its supply of questions and the graphics are set up like the board in the game itself. Obviously it requires two players to play properly, but you can play on your own if you want to improve your general knowledge. Not a bad game to buy and it will be good fun for the family.



▶

players, the number of games per round and the skill level— which alters the amount of time you have to complete a round. Each player is allocated a colour and their own 'buzzer' key. When an initial block has been selected the relevant question appears on the screen, any player can then interrupt and answer the question. If the correct answer is obtained then the block becomes your property. The game continues in this form until one player has achieved a row of blocks. At the end of a game the gamescore is displayed, you will then have the option to load a new set of questions or continue play.

Lee

CRITICISM

If you're a game show freak who may be considering buying BLOCKBUSTERS, read this review first! The inlay card wasn't bad, but as I found out, first impressions can be very deceptive. The graphics were extremely poor and the screens were dull and uninteresting, there was only a limited amount of colour used. A reasonable attempt was made at a tune. BLOCKBUSTERS had some addictive qualities as the definitions were good and there were plenty of them.

Richard

CRITICISM

This is what I would term as a 'party game' in that it can only be enjoyed to the full when you have a number of players that are suitably intoxicated. There is nothing really outstanding in the game, the questions even tend to repeat themselves occasionally, but with that said it can prove fun and educational for those who want an alternative to alien bashing.

Presentation 60%
A fair shot at the telly game.

Graphics 40%
Not inspired, but effective.

Sound 45%
The odd bleep and the title tune.

Playability 55%
Watch out if your typing is suspect.

Addictive qualities 55%
Great fun against a friend.

Value for money 52%
A fair number of questions.

Overall 53%
A good adaption of the series.

BUSTER BLOCK

Kuma, £6.95 cass, joystick or keys.

Well, there I was happily having a wander through Hampton Court maze when, zappo, loads of creepy crawly nasties appeared. Some of them looked like devils, with spiky red hair, some were fat and yellow and, to my amazement, even some little green doobries. So what did I do?, well, I'll tell ya, I push great blocks of cement at them, what else can ya do?. Having killed them in one bleeding section I ran round the corner and, strike a light, more of the little beggars. Not only that there's no less than twenty 'e levels of this chaos.

Each screen, and there's four hundred in total, is split between a playing section and a score panel. The score panel shows your pre-

Paul

CRITICISM

What a colourful game — well that's enough of the praises, now down to business. This poor excuse for a game is unimaginative, mind numbingly boring, and to me, does not seem to have any point to it. After playing it a few times it suddenly dawned on me that I was loosing points quicker than I was gaining them. If you take too long on a screen you lose points, If you obliterate the nasties with your fists you loose energy, which cannot be replenished, and to top it all you don't even get a bonus for clearing a room. I not going to waste any more ink insulting this game so overall it's PATHETIC.

Lee

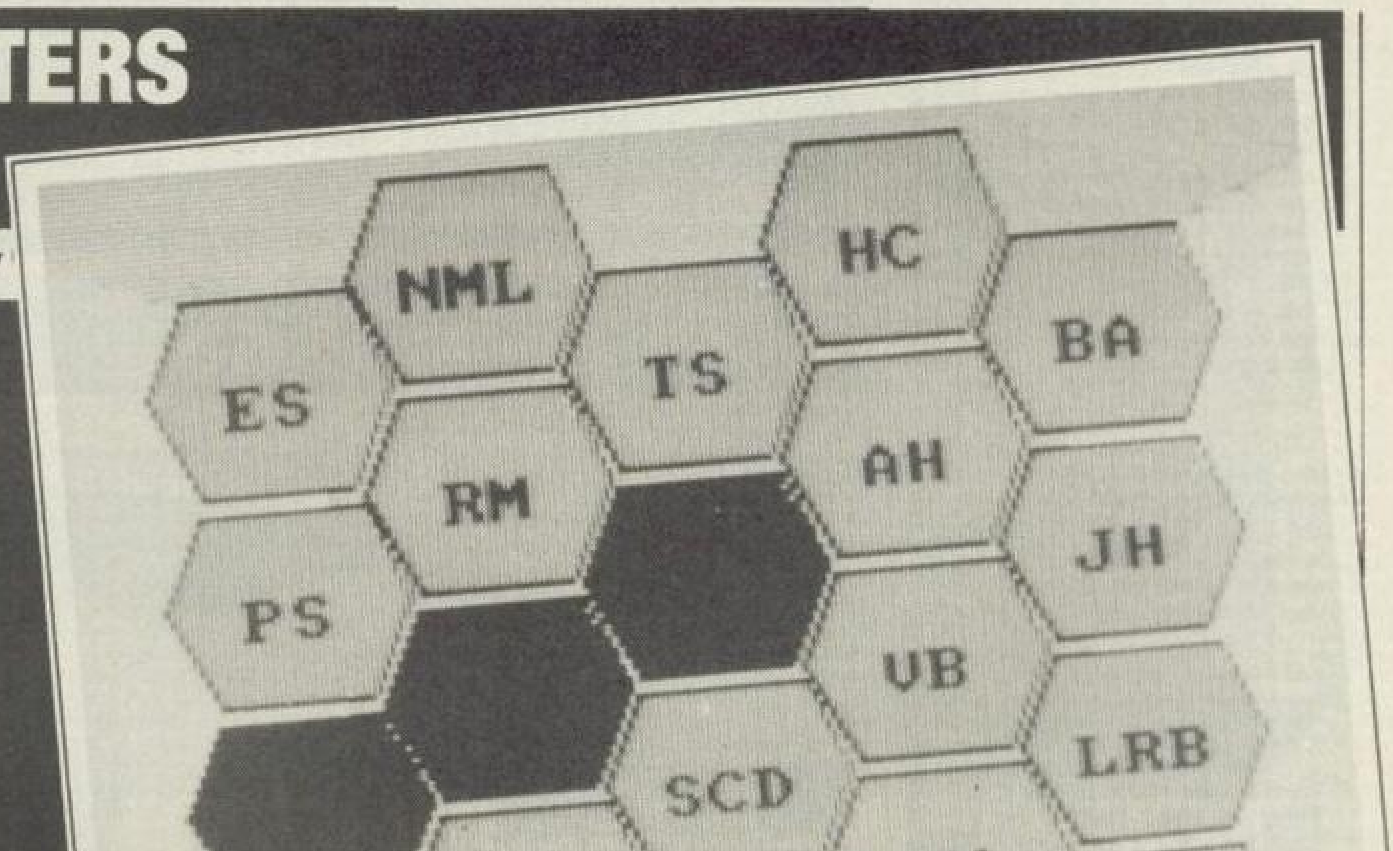
CRITICISM

One word, no several, spring to mind after playing this so called pengo game. They are words such as diabolical, nay abysmal. This game was the sort you expect to find cluttering the shelves way back when the Amstrad was launched. At the mindblowing price at £6.95 it is ridiculously overpriced and there are a lot better games on cheap ranges than this rubbish. This game does not deserve space on a shelf and, I should think, is more deserved of life in a deep, dank and smelly well.

BLOCKBUSTERS GOLDRUN

Macsen, £9.95 cass keys only

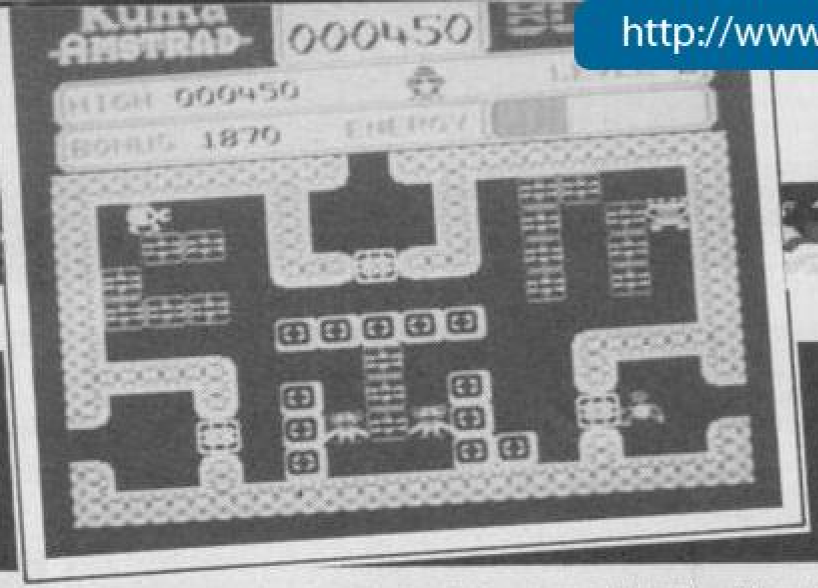
This follows on from the *Blockbusters* round, and is for one player with the same objective as in the *Blockbusters* game, that is to complete a line of blocks



Paul

CRITICISM

There are several differences between this game and the one you watch on the television. Probably the most frustrating of these is the fact that every answer has to be typed in. This means more time is spent typing in the answers than thinking of them. Although you are given a chance to retype a wrongly spelt answer, the clock continues to run and much time can be wasted in this way. Although there are nine skill levels, in practice only a few of these can be used as when on the faster levels it is simply not possible to type at such a speed. On the slowest level it is quite possible to attempt every question on the board before the time runs out. Graphics are simple, clear and effective. However, the tune is extremely tinkly although it is recognisable.



sent score, high score, lives' level and the amount of your energy which is depleted every time you bump into a creature. There is also a time level which acts as a bonus when you leave a screen. In the playing area each screen has a different layout consisting of walls and the scattered blocks which you can push at the nasties to kill them. As you wander around your mission is to obliterate all the nasties and find a route out of the maze. Happy blocking, Buster.

Anthony

CRITICISM

Great use of colour but where is the game? It's a maze type PENGO look-a-like but the maze is so big and the amount of energy you have to complete the game so small that it's unlikely that you will ever get out. There are some nice touches, the bouncing blocks and almost intelligent monsters but generally the game is just another average maze game. If it was a £1.99 then it would be a good budget game but at £6.95 it is very overpriced.

Presentation 30%
Below average, very little help given as to the theme of the game.

Graphics 40%
Mode one, garish generally nasty.

Sound 30%
Um, pardon?

Playability 25%
Easy, but frustrating.

Addictive qualities 26%
You probably won't want to play it more than twice.

Value for money 20%
At nearly seven quid it's the biggest rip off ever.

Overall 21%
Poor game at a ridiculous price.

Lee

CRITICISM

GOLDRUN is the continuation of the BLOCKBUSTERS game only, like the TV show, the questions are harder and use more than one word for the answer. It is not what can be considered as brilliant but all the same it is family entertainment and well worth buying for a rainy day when there's nothing better to do. Although a lot of the time can be spent typing the answers in, and often the best player will simply be the best typist, it can be fun trying to beat one another's score. There are a fair number of questions supplied so there isn't too much repetition, but obviously more would be nice.

across the playing area.

During a game a question may be chosen by pressing the first letter shown in any one hexagon. Having typed your answer the computer checks it and if it correct you gain that block. A clock at the top of the screen slowly counts down the time allowed for answering. If a slight mispelling occurs the player usually gets another chance to enter the correctly spelled answer. At the end of the game the best time is displayed. Can you take on the mighty Bob Holness?

Anthony

CRITICISM

I enjoyed this game much more than BLOCKBUSTERS, mainly because you don't have to scamper around trying to find some one to play with. The graphics, and sound, are adequate for the games needs and work as well on a green screen as on a colour monitor. My only objection is to the price tag of almost £10, which seems a bit steep for what the game really offers, overall not bad.

Presentation 70%
A good package with adequate instructions.

Graphics 57%
They do the job.

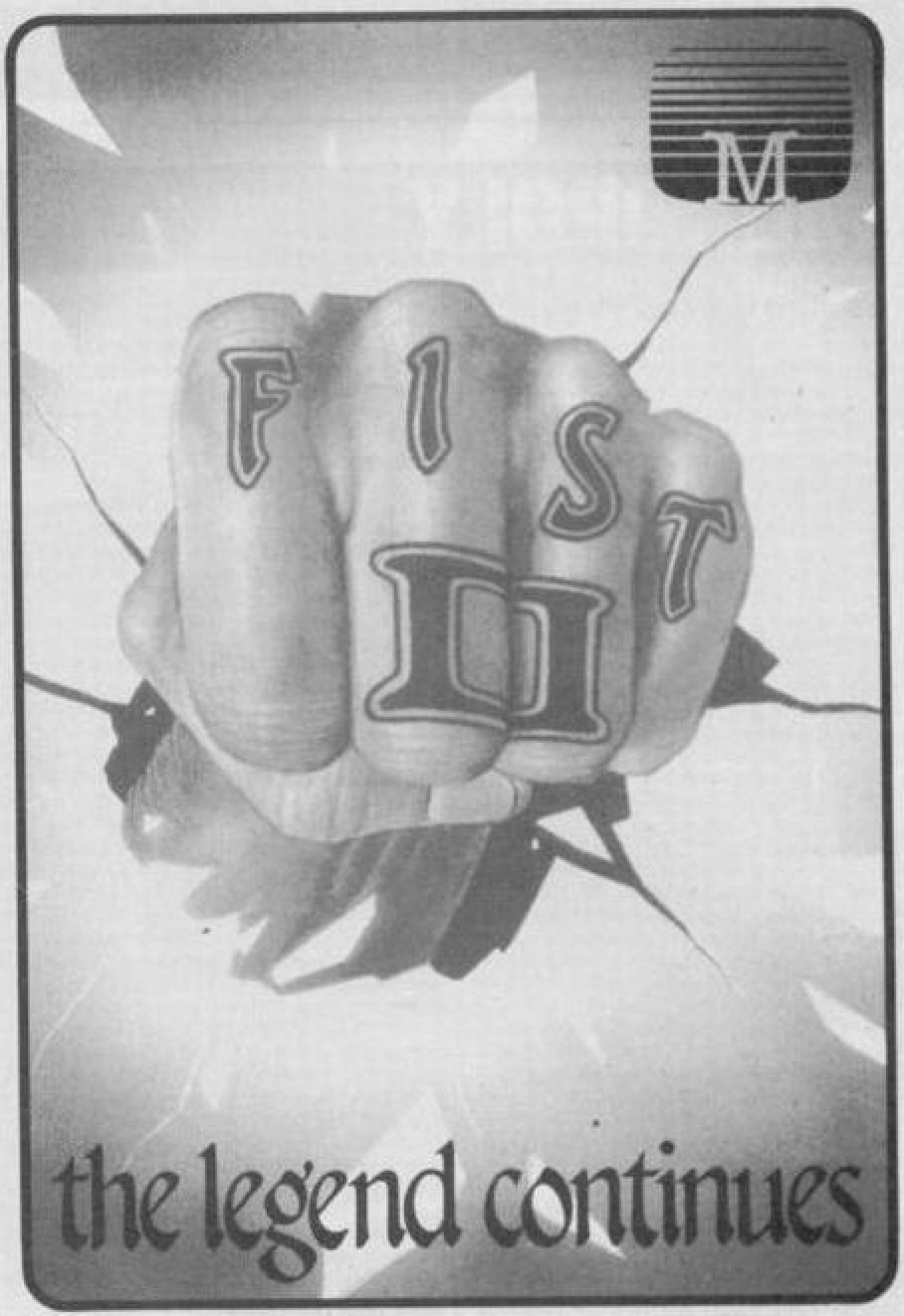
Sound 70%
The theme tune now and then plus the odd helpful beep.

Playability 60%
Bad typists or spellers will have problems.

Addictive qualities 65%
Going for that fastest time.

Value for money 60%
A good number of questions.

Overall 61%
Fans of the telly series will go for it.



The Magazine of Fantastic Media

The September issue has features on the latest blockbuster fantasy films: Highlander, Aliens, Enemy Mine plus returning ET, TVs Doctor Who and lots of competitions with videos of Thunderbirds, Captain Scarlet, The Stuff, and a film-set visit all to be won!

We are on the pulse of the fantastic, are you?

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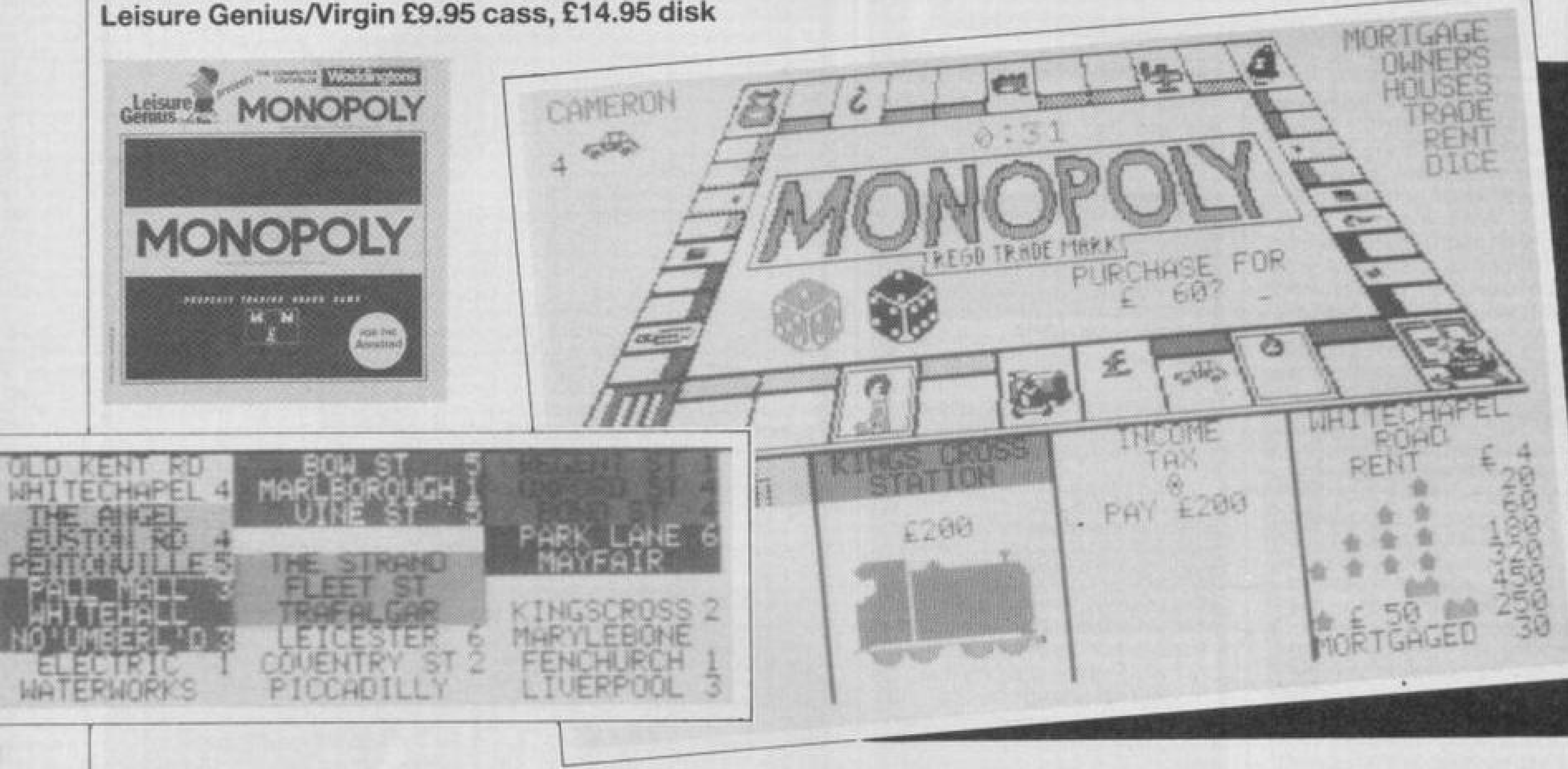
MONOPOLY

Leisure Genius/Virgin £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk



Ever had the urge to be a slum landlord? Ever wanted to laugh piteously as lesser beings beg for mercy whilst being thrown onto the streets? Or is it just that when you get the board game out after the Xmas turkey some drunken slob knocks his can of Skol all over the board.

Relive the thrills and spills (sic) of the best selling board game on your Amstrad. This is the officially licensed kosher version, approved by Waddingtons.

Richard

CRITICISM

After many Sunday afternoons playing MONOPOLY I really looked forward to the computer version. But I'm afraid it lacks the sort of atmosphere that made the board game enjoyable. The computer version is very pretty with some very good graphics, of the dice especially, but these take quite a while to build up. The only people that will enjoy this are people with a lot of friends, as it needs some kind of atmosphere to play competitively. But anyone who wants to buy the game should go for the board game, in preference to the computer version.

At the start of the game, you select the number of players, any number of which can be played by the computer. In the approved manner, players dice for first turn, take £1500 spanking new notes and charge round the board buying anything that moves. All rules are implemented, and the computer acts as dice roller, banker, and general overseer.

At any time, any of the players can make deals. So if you have a large number of players all huddled around the keyboard all trying to press buttons, things could get a bit fraught. Fortunately, the program is fairly rugged and will respond to these sort of blandishments with a rude beep. The players can trade property between themselves, mortgage property at will, buy houses and check on each other's holdings.

The screen display is split in half. The top half is a perspective view of the board in mode 1. It shows the position of all the players' tokens. It also contains a prompt window when simple transactions are carried out, such as buying and selling houses. The bottom half of the screen shows all other relevant information. When a player is moving, it gives a blown up view of the board showing you which expensive delights are coming up. Unfortunately, it doesn't show any property which has been built on the site.

Lee

CRITICISM

This is not a game for players who like their action fast and furious. The speed of everything is little more than a snail's pace and it seems to go out of it's way to attempt to do all deals in the most complicated and longwinded way possible. The plus side to this is that all the controls are simple to use, and every deal is done in a thorough way so that even the beginner can suss out what his options are and how to use them. There were no discernible rules' problems, as you'd expect with an official version, and with a lot of people, it can be great fun. The display is a problem, you really must know what property is where, so you can assess the sort of money you might have to cough up.

Should anyone wish to check up on the current state of the holdings, a press of a player's number will display what they own. Then, for the benefit of the financially inquisitive, a player's current assets are displayed. This is only a cash total and not a detailed breakdown. If you want to know where a player has built houses: write it down!

On deciding to stop wheeling and dealing, the game gets to the nitty gritty. Hit 'D' for dice and the bones roll across the screen with a noise which could be the sound of clattering dice to someone blessed with a vivid imagination.

Anthony

CRITICISM

If you're a wheeler and dealer and like slow monotonous financial transactions this game can be fun, unfortunately I found it rather long winded. The game takes a while to get into and even with the simple game controls and every deal explained step by step, the traditional Monopoly board takes a good deal of studying before all the properties can be recognised and remembered. Overall, if you're a player who likes speedy dealings, my advice would be to give it a miss mate.

Then comes the crunch: your boot, top hat or whatever wanders along and, horror of horrors, it's a hotel on Mayfair. Debtors try to stare about innocently, whistle something fairly offhand and hope the owner of the property will not awake from their slumber and push the 'R' key to collect their rent. There is a more direct approach which would be to bribe some of the other players into physically restraining them!

In times of dire need, the computer will handle such delightful transactions as hocking hotels and houses or mortgaging property, but it won't give anyone a chance to try to flog their property to other players if they're bankrupt — it's just the old elbow.

Presentation 70%
Sticks to the layout of the board game.

Graphics 68%
Not inspired, but fairly effective.

Sound 25%
Not a lot.

Playability 42%
Plenty of menus, clear prompts.

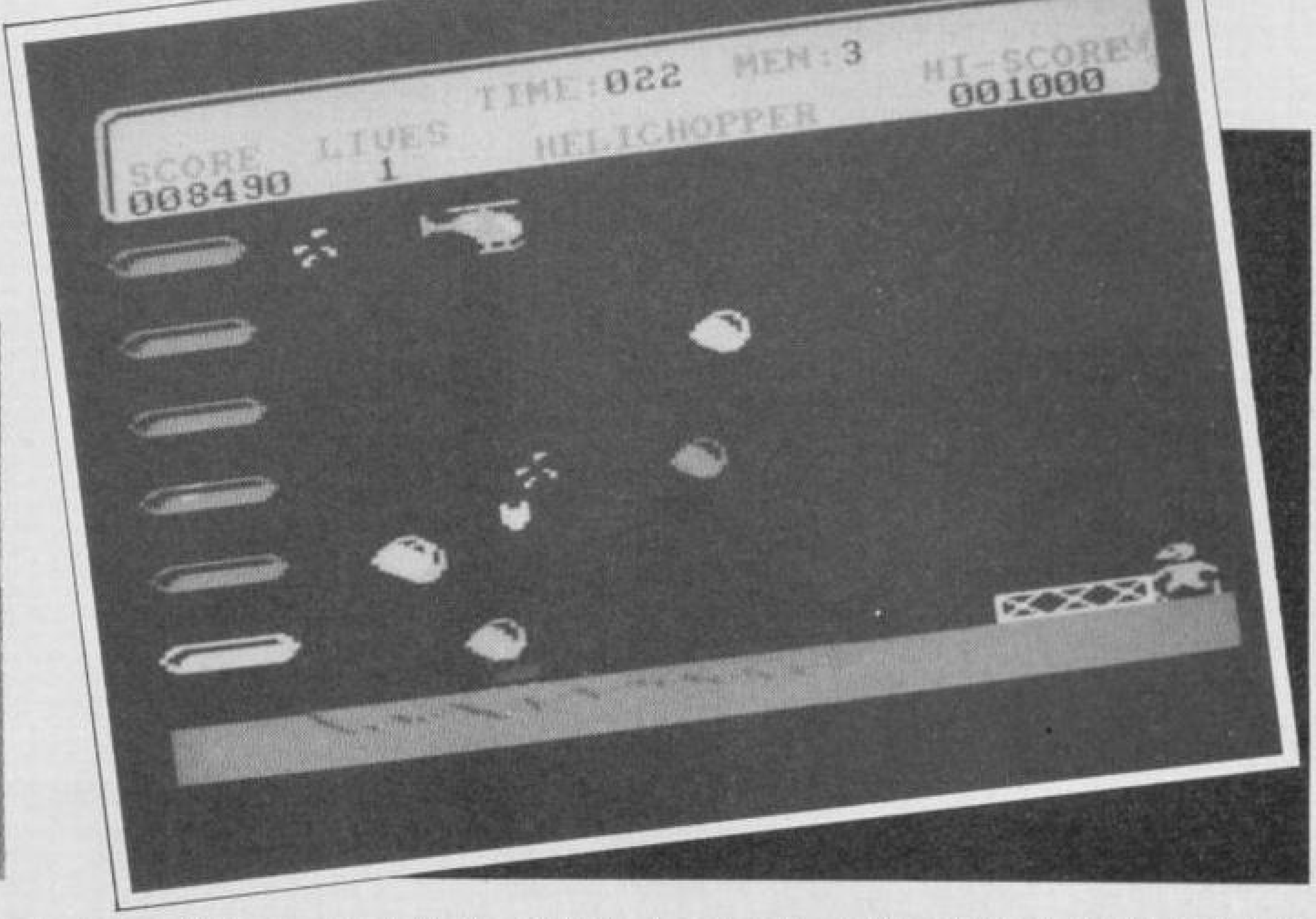
Addictive qualities 33%
Will only appeal to people with patience.

Value for money 35%
Cheaper than the board game.

Overall 39%
Not bad as board games go.

HELICHOPPER

Firebird Silver £1.99 cass



SILVER
199
RANGE
HELICHOPPER
FIREBIRD

This comes hot off the presses of Firebird's Silver range and sits the player in the seat of a helicopter with, naturally, a perilous mission to perform. Clones, not being particularly intelligent little bods, have all pottered off for a picnic and found themselves lost within the hot and sticky swamp that swarms with deadly doobries and would quite like to go home now please . . .

Your mission, should you accept it, is to fly into the swamp and rescue the catastrophic clones who are all behind an electric fence. Equipped with a helicopter carrying an unlimited supply of bombs, rescue is achieved by flying to the perimeter of the fence and landing. The fence will then be lowered to allow one of the homesick saps to board the chopper whilst any nasties in the area will suddenly take fright and leave you well alone. Perhaps they've heard of the nasty habits of clones on picnics. Take them to the left of the screen and deposit them on a landing stage when the roof is coloured white and the clone will disembark and an indicator at the top of the screen labelled MEN will show how many more lost loonies must be collected before moving to the next screen. Each screen has a time limit that ticks away and if all the rescues are not deposited before the time limit then the helicopter will spontaneously combust. Hot stuff!

Anthony

CRITICISM

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into a software shop Firebird present HELICHOPPER. The loading tune was vaguely familiar and the game is a doddle to get into. The simplistic sprites however,bob around the screen and are generally quite poor. The sound doesn't detract from the game as it is limited to the odd beep, whir and bang. The game is very limited too with no lasting appeal. It's unfortunate that even at £1.99 the money would be better spent on something else.

Richard

CRITICISM

Cor blimey! This must be one of the most simple games on the Amstrad this year. Despite the screens being called things like 'prepare to die' and 'rectangles that look round' I found HELICHOPPER extremely easy to complete, subsequently I played the game for a very short time. The graphics are very poor and just consist of some very small characters all having their own colour which makes the screen look very plain and uninteresting. HELICHOPPER may be only £1.99, but with games like HARVEY HEADBANGER around who needs HELICHOPPER?

Curiously shaped nasties float around the scene in various colours that each have a different points value when bombed. Their touch is deadly and they should be avoided at all costs. Some mutate into heat-seeking nasties called Dollipoids that are strangely resemble ducks! These will home in on the chopper but are not brave enough to follow it anywhere near the electric fence. Each of the swamp's inhabitants are equally deadly but you score between ten and two hundred points depending on their colour. They vary from blue at ten points and increase in multiples of ten until they become white which are worth seventy points each. Anything that flashes must be worth a peek at as disposing of these will earn two hundred points.

The swamp will eject rocks at you occasionally and these can be destroyed but remember not to land on the bog as the sucking splerge will pull your chopper down. There are twenty three screens in total which can be sussed out before play as they all run whilst in demo mode. Firebird have also included a cheat mode. By pressing repeatedly down on the 5, 6, 7 and 0 keys on the keypad you enter cheat mode. All that is needed then is the passwords which, unfortunately, Firebird have omitted from the cassette inlay.

Lee

CRITICISM

O K so it's simple, and okay it's graphically about the blandest thing you've seen this week, and the sound track was written by a dyslexic five year old, but this game kind of grows on you the way moss does. There is a curiously , mesmeric quality about bombing all the wobbly sprites wandering around the place. Oh yes, by the way, don't do anything silly like rushing around rescuing 'people' the approved method for the high score freak is just to go around bombing ducks and sundry other stuff until the time runs out. Alright eventually you blow up, but you score a hell of a lot of points. Not bad if you're feeling extremely silly on the night.

Presentation 45%
S'okay.

Graphics 35%
Rather nasty.

Sound 25%
Even nastier.

Playability 55%
If you can use a joystick, you can play this.

Addictive qualities 45%
For the mindlessly violent.

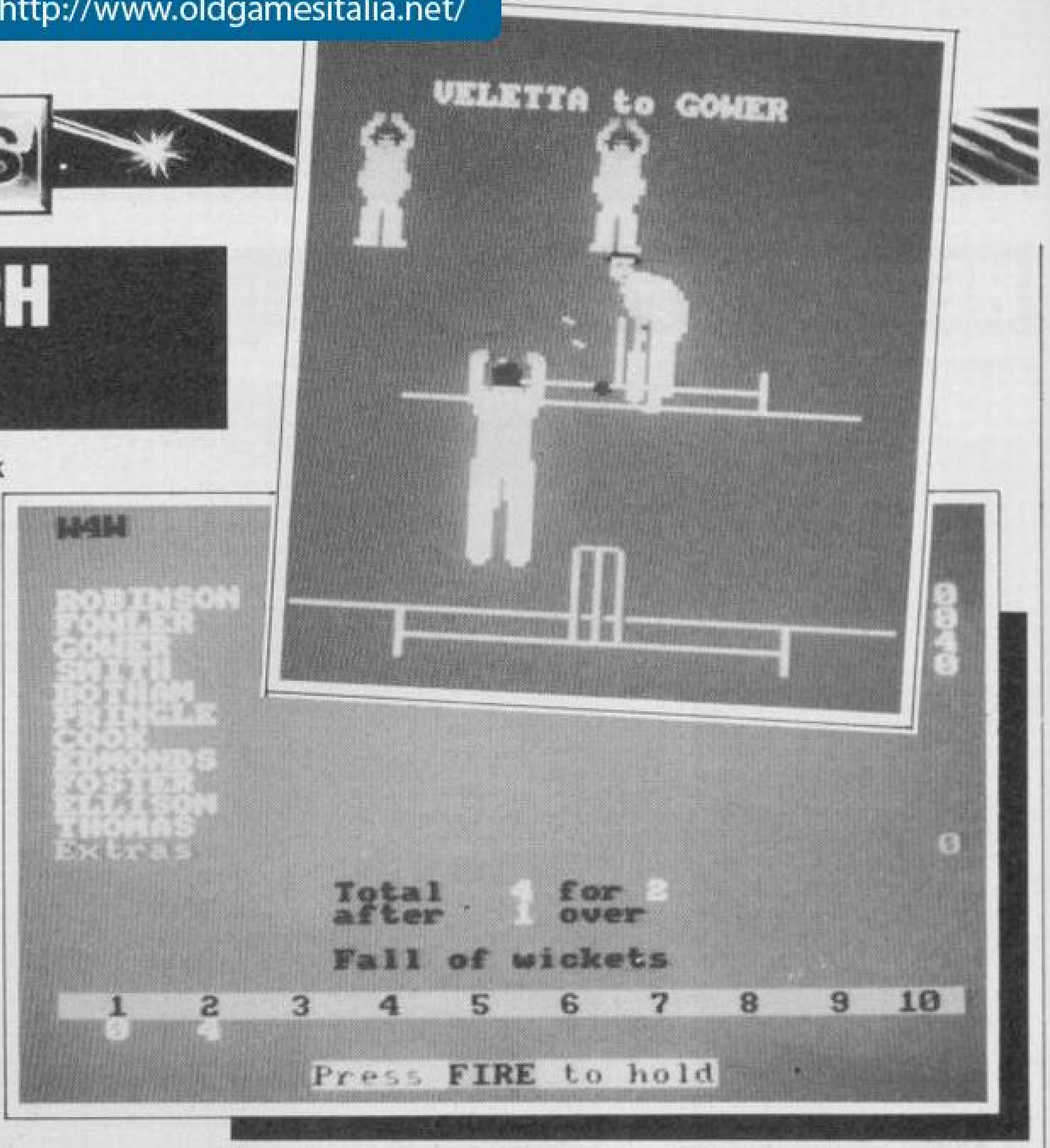
Value for money 40%
Depends what you like, cheap though.

Overall 38%
You've ben charged more for less.

GRAHAM GOOCH TEST CRICKET

ASL Software. £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
Author: M J McLean
Conversion: Graham Blighe

Graham Gooch's
TEST CRICKET
AMSTRAD CPC



As another season of miraculous defeats of the English Test side draws to a close, **ASL** brings you a game which allows you to relive the season's great moments from the comfort of your armchair.

Depending on your mood of the moment, this game gives you several levels of involvement. If you are feeling particularly laconic, you can just sit back and watch the contest unfold before your very eyes. If you are feeling more dynamic than, say, a wombat on valium, then you might like to make the odd bowling change now and then; bring on the seam attack when the pace men start to look a bit ragged, or try and pin down a free scoring batsman with the odd bit of spin. You can even decide to bowl more to the leg or off side.

anthony

CRITICISM

I feel there are two sports that really do not convert very well to a computer game format, Tai tree leaping and cricket. Whilst Tai tree leaping may attract overseas sales, GRAHAM GOOCH'S TEST CRICKET is destined for lesser things. There is very little to do during the arcade mode of the game except for a little manic joystick waggling during bowling, with no way of directing the ball except to change the bowler from offside to legside bowling. The batting is likewise dull with aggressive, and normal modes. The game is slow and the graphics could be much better defined considering the overall sloth-like movement. Not a game for arcade or simulation buffs alike. If you're interested in cricket, spend your money on watching a real game.

When batting, you can decide to be aggressive, defensive, or fairly neutral. Lastly, for the energetic types, there is arcade mode where the player controls the speed of bowling and timing of the shot when in bat. The bowling speed is controlled decathalon style. So in a test match, you can expect to be waggling away for ages — a true test of stamina.

Lee

CRITICISM

I can't remember a cricket game on the Amstrad, but I'm sure that some company would have fallen into the trap of producing a below average game and just because it's cricket they think they can get away with it. That said it is a very good cricket game amongst cricket games but still not up to the standard of most Amstrad games. The graphics are very big and fairly detailed, but the bowling screen does suffer from an awful case of gliching which, surprisingly enough, really spoils the game. The whole game is good if you like watching cricket, but if you just like the action bits you may find it a trifle boring.

The graphics show the action around the wicket from the 'behind the bowler' view you see on TV. The large sprite of the bowler lumbers up to the wicket, and the ball whistles through the air with the speed appropriate for the type of bowler. The batsman then makes a stab at it. If he connects, then the view changes to the outfield, where fielders either collects the ball, catches it, or watches the ball go hurtling over the boundary.

If not satisfied with the teams supplied (last year's England and Australia squads) a new team can be produced. To do this, the characteristics of the new team must be entered. These are: name, batting average, bowling average, and bowling type. The new lineup can then be saved. In this way, if sufficiently dedicated, you could wade through your collection of Wisden's, keying in the various sides from great matches of the past and re-enact them.

Paul

CRITICISM

Cricket is always going to be a tricky subject for a game. How do you keep someone's interested in a game which takes the best part of a week to play. This game simply hasn't got the necessary amount of skill and detail to keep the player's attention. So is it going to appeal to the dedicated cricketer? Probably not. The graphics aren't bad and the animation is alright, but the sound is a bit awful. Rather than leather on willow, this game sounds like someone being hit over the head with a blunt instrument — plus the obligatory white noise for the applause. This game should have been more like some baseball simulations where the bowler chooses the ball bowled and the batsman decides on his shot.

After every over, at the fall of a wicket, and the end of the innings, the computer displays the score card and the bowling figures.

All the usual details are here, such as run out, catches, lbw, and the clatter of bails (not balls) when clean bowled. There is a full range of match types from the hurly burly of the one day 40 over slog out to the somewhat more sedate pace of the five day two innings test. There appears to be no limit to the total time taken in this mode, so if you are trying to chase a 500 odd run total, don't expect to be saved by rain or bad light on the fifth day.

Presentation 70%
Not bad, the roll your own team bit is nice.

Graphics 60%
Animation is rather 'lumpy' and the action isn't.

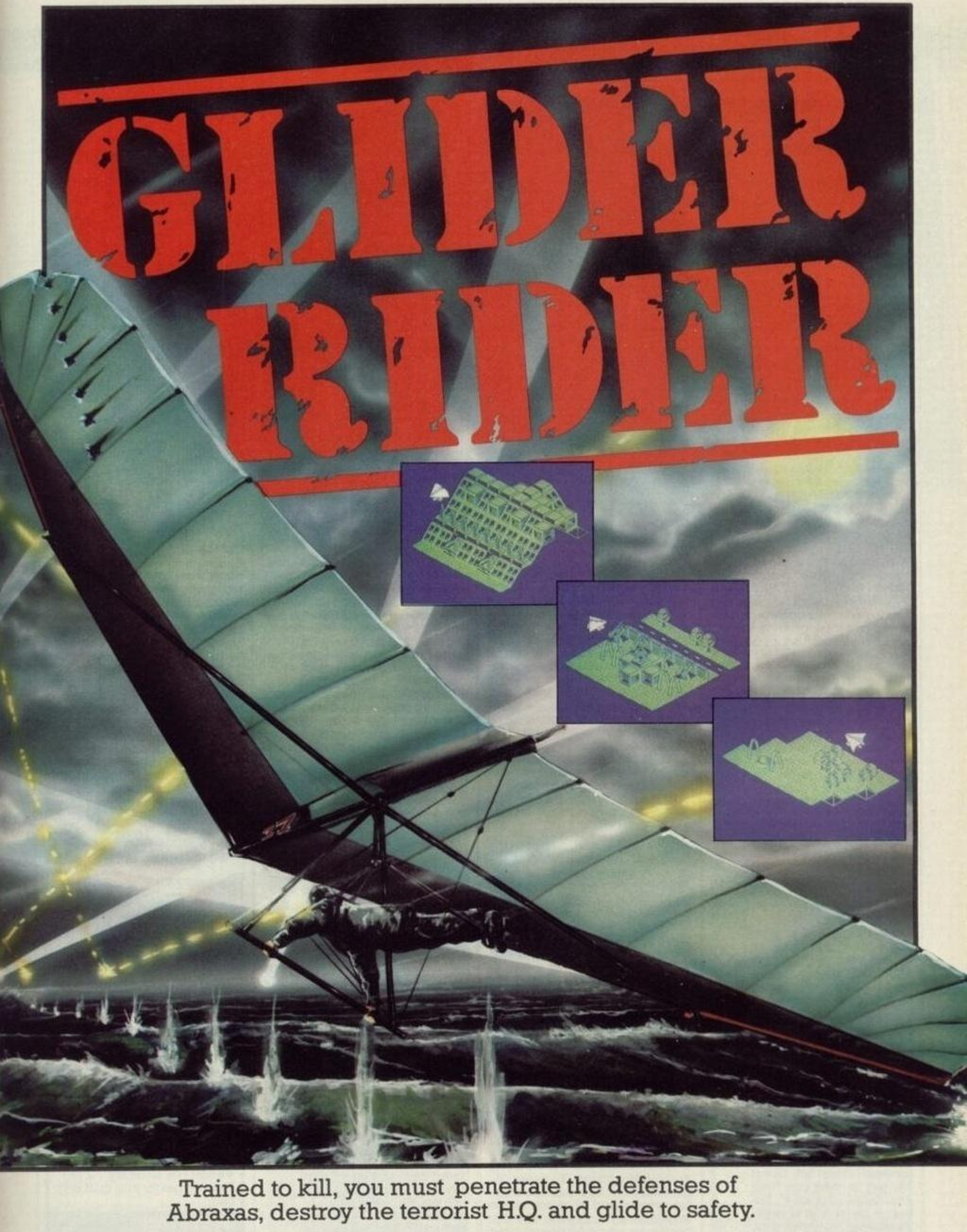
Sound 30%
The clunk of lead on hardboard.

Playability 65%
So playable, you don't have to do anything!

Addictive qualities 35%
Yeah, well, if you like doing nothing, it's your kinda game.

Value for money 33%
Unless you're a cricket addict, it'll soon be in the bin.

Overall 40%
As cricket games go, the best of a bad bunch.



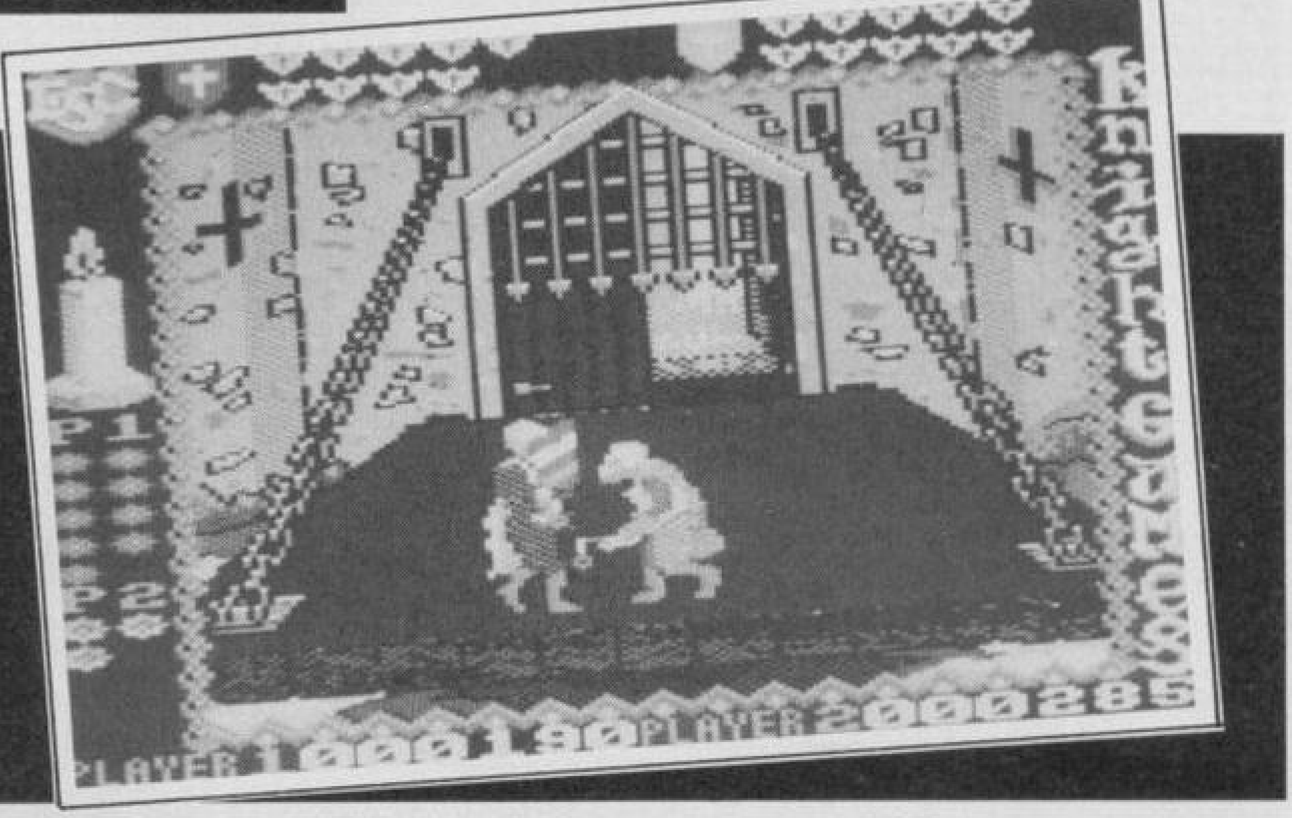
Trained to kill, you must penetrate the defenses of
Abraxas, destroy the terrorist H.Q. and glide to safety.

In case of difficulty, Glider Rider
can be obtained from Quicksilva
Ltd., Units 1 and 2, Conlon
Developments, Watery Lane,
Darwen, Lancs BB3 3ET

QUICKSILVA

Quicksilva Ltd., Victory House,
Leicester Place,
London WC2H 7NB.
Tel: 01 439 0666

KNIGHT GAMES



English Software, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

In days of old, when knights were bold, and women weren't invented . . . they played *Knight Games* on their Amstrads!

Knight Games is a series of eight challenging events, set in the Middle Ages, with pageantry, banquets and all the palaver of battles. You, Sir Crumbly of Ludlow, have decided to hold up your reputation and enter into the gruelling events. Before beginning you are briefed on how to score, in the battles not with the wenches, silly. In the six actual combat events, your objective is to win as many roses as possible from your opponent. For every five hits you deliver to your opponent he loses a rose, and for each ten roses he loses a shield is deducted from him. If you manage to wipe out all of your opponent's shields you are awarded a bonus, a hundred points for every shield that remains in your possession. Now, bring forth the games.

After the master program has been loaded each individual event is loaded independently, selected from a menu. Your score is not displayed as a total for all the events, but as a separate score on each event.

SWORDFIGHT ONE

Out to the Castle courtyard for this event, Sir Crumbly stands, sword in hand, prepared to beat his challenger with his selection of twelve vicious attacking and skilful defensive moves. Sir Crumbly is dressed, tastefully, in battle grey with a bright little yellow plume that fluffs around in the wind. Moves include attacks to the head, lunges to the body and the artful swing at the neck. A candle marks the time, which alters in length depending on which of the three skill levels you select.

Lee

CRITICISM

Look, I've got nothing against combat games. On the other hand, what I do have something against is the same old tosh churned out again. This game is a major leap backwards as far as I can see. All the things that made FIST and SAI COMBAT great are missing here. Most of the attacks have the same range, and in the pole and Sword 1 games, the most effective move is just to keep walking forward, nutting your opponent pretty regularly — it certainly beats the crap out of the computer opponent. With some of the others there's a bit more subtlety, but there isn't the same subtlety of timing you got with FIST. The other major criticism is it takes so damn long. Knocking out an opponent needs 500 blows! The sort of endurance Frank Bruno might be proud of. Totting up the number of points you scored, decathalon wise, might have saved this game - sorry, it did nothing for me.

Richard

CRITICISM

I disagree with the others, in that I found KNIGHT GAMES one of the most enjoyable bash-em-ups I have seen for some time. The graphics really make the game, and the fantastic feeling you achieve as you rip out your partners entrails is great. There are a few bugs in the fighting sequences, such as if you continue to walk forward in the sword fights, your score goes through the roof. As a two player game it's even batter and combined with the evocative music it ranks highly in my personal top ten.

QUARTERSTAFF

Reminiscent of Robin Hood and Little John's battle, Sir Crumbly stands on a fallen log that crosses a river. Nifty thwacks are needed to crumple the opponent and each hit is represented by a flash as the metal collides. Various attacking moves abound and your accuracy in implementing them decides your score.

ARCHERY

One of the non-combat games. Sir Crumbly, armed with a long bow and a veritable quiver of arrows, has to line up the crosshairs with wooden horses that trundle along in the background. To make life more difficult the crosshairs wobble around and so a lot of the targetting is left to luck, also the horses are spaced differently, but luckily the arrow can be directed whilst in flight.

BALL AND CHAIN

A real bashing game, this one, which takes place on the castle drawbridge. Protected only with a helmet Sir Crumbly has to survive the oncoming attacks of the ball and chain. Strikes can be made to the head and practically any other parts of the body, only watch them spikes, they're rather sharp.

SWORDFIGHT TWO

Basically the same as the first event but with a few different moves and a pretty new backdrop.

PIKESTAFF

A lethal weapon and no mistake, lunges must be carefully orchestrated if Sir Crumbly is to defeat this new opponent. Graced with a new helmet, totally dent free, he can engage in sweeping attacks before, either he, or the challenger, collapse to a heap on the ground.

anthony

CRITICISM

I was really looking forward to KNIGHT GAMES as I thought it would be the new type of bash and blow games — but unfortunately the game is much much too boring. The first game on the tape, sword fighting, is just a case of finding the right move and repeatedly bashing the bloke. Graphically, the game is of a very high standard, consisting of fairly detailed and colourful graphics that are best viewed from a distance, as a close look reveals the blocky origin of the backgrounds. I liked the varied tunes that played constantly through the games, but felt that the sound FX could have been improved immensely. Nice presentation but the game is very boring and unplayable.

CROSSBOW

Sir Crumbly, now armed with his trusty crossbow, has to line up his crosshairs with revolving targets. Points depend on your accuracy in hitting the target. There are three targets each at various distances; higher points are accrued if the furthest one can be hit correctly.

AXEMAN

For the final event Sir Crumbly travels inside to the banquetting hall. His success, or failure, is going to be the entertainment for the evening. Armed with a lethal axe you can sweep to the head and slice to all sorts of places on your opponent's body. Clashes of metal result in flying sparks and the chink of metal. At last Sir Crumbly has maintained his honour and is awarded the Order Of The Bathchair.

Presentation 74%
Generally good, but continual loading may get irritating.

Graphics 82%
An excellent attempt at producing medieval atmosphere.

Sound 83%
Nine different tunes and assorted metallic effects.

Playability 67%
Good, not so many moves that it gets complicated.

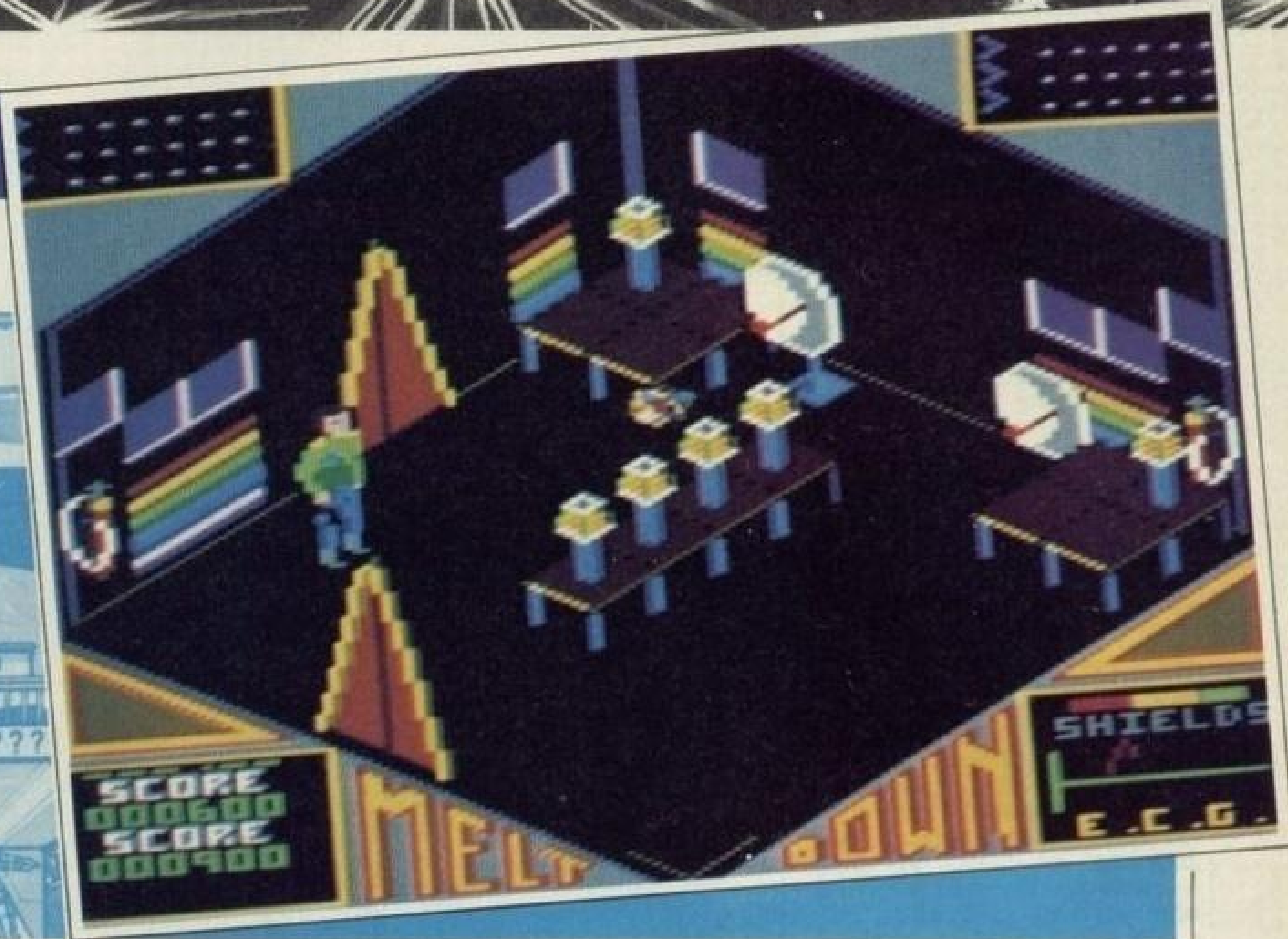
Addictive qualities 62%
Instantly appealing, but certain techniques make the game too easy.

Value for money 72%
Eight games for nine quid isn't bad.

Overall 70%
Mixed opinions, but generally recommended.

MELTDOWN

Alligata, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
Author: Ross Goodley



Shall we play a game the computer bellows at you in synthesised speech. A foretaste of some of the sound effects to come. Then on comes the title music composed by We MUSIC, showing that their talents aren't just confined to the Commodore. Then on to the game itself.

You must close down a reactor before it starts doing Chernobyl impressions. This means working your way through three floors each consisting of 64 rooms. Scattered around each floor are six terminals from which passwords must be obtained. Between each level is a midi game. After the third level, you must insert the fuel rods into the berserk reactor. Naturally, you can't go in to the reactor area yourself, but must use a new programming language SCUBA to control the Remote Manipulation Vehicle. SCUBA stands' for Simple Code Understandable By Anyone. It is somewhat like Pascal which has to be compiled before you can get it to do anything.

The graphics are very reminiscent of *Get Dexter* from PSS. Each room consists of one to four doors and a number of obstacles. These can be passive bits of furniture, which can either be moved around, leapt over, or in extreme cases, shot.

Our hero, Bail Bond (groan) can move in four directions, perform nifty somersaults and comes equipped with a fairly mean piece of death dealing firmware. This is probably just as well, as on his travels, foes ranging from Cybermen, floating Poached Eggs and even deadly Dusty Bins will confront our hero, fortunately only one meanie at a time attacks you. Some rooms are also filled with electric pylons and zappers which just stand there and blast away — to be avoided at all costs.

Some areas of the reactor are radioactive, but fortunately you can put on a suit before you go in, but you can't somersault whilst wearing the suit.

Bail Bond is supplied with a shield which will protect him against most of the excesses thrown at him, as long as he takes time out to recover. Obviously he must bear in mind that each section of the game is done against a time limit, so excessive dawdling is not a good idea. Despite the apparent degree of protection for our hero, there is one sure way to end up 'terminated': jump on the nearest meanie. This is not as silly as it sounds. The only difference between leaping and firing is that one is accompanied by a movement of the joystick, the other is not. So if you forget to centre the joystick before firing — it's curtains.

Each password is obtained by finding a room with a computer terminal in it. You log on, and then play a mini game. These are quite trivial, but good fun. You'll find such old favourites as snake, crossfire and a sliding tiles puzzle. If you fail to complete the game or run out of time, you lose one of the passwords you already have.

Lee

CRITICISM

Games like this have never really rated highly for me as you often need to put a lot of thought and effort into them before you start to enjoy them. There are many very nice little extras involved in this one like the three mini-games and the speech but they don't really add that much to the game as a whole. Graphically MELTDOWN suffers from the dreaded porky pixels. The 3D effect is very good although It is sometimes difficult to get your bearings. The sound is very good, there is an excellent tune on the title screen and the spot effects and speech are also top hole. Generally I don't really agree with some of the other reviewers as I didn't find this one particually compelling or playable.

Richard

CRITICISM

Never mind the quality feel the width. What we have here is one hell qf a big game. None of the component parts is particularly mindblowing, but the sheer size is going to mean this game will take time to tackle. The tune is really good, and shows just what Amstrad sound is capable of (other software houses please note). But apart from the nice sound effects and good, colourful graphics, is there a lot else to this game? None of the rooms are really in the Ultimate league for difficulty, but most require some technique. The mini games are a nice bit of fun, but the midi games are a bit of a let down. The problem is, by going for size, there has only been a small amount of time to spend writing each part of the game.

The final part is very frustrating. There are virtually no clues about what to do with SCUBA so in the end you might end up totally frustrated. This is certainly a promising first try and bodes well for future efforts.

Anthony

CRITICISM

I' was expecting great things from this game, but after seeing GET DEXTER it doesn't strike me as so magnificent. The most impressive feature is the music, from We MUSIC, link it up to your stereo and those smug C64 owners will be knocked for six. The BBC type computer terminals are fun to use, and work as a break from the arcade/adventure of the main format. Given time this game might grow on me, but after a while playing it I am not enthralled to return to it again.

Presentation 77%
Packaging falls apart and the instructions are a little vague.

Graphics 84%
Colourful and clear.

Sound 89%
Superb tune at the start and some nice speech.

Playability 80%
Nothing too difficult, but there's a lot of it.

Addictive qualities 77%
There's always another room to get to.

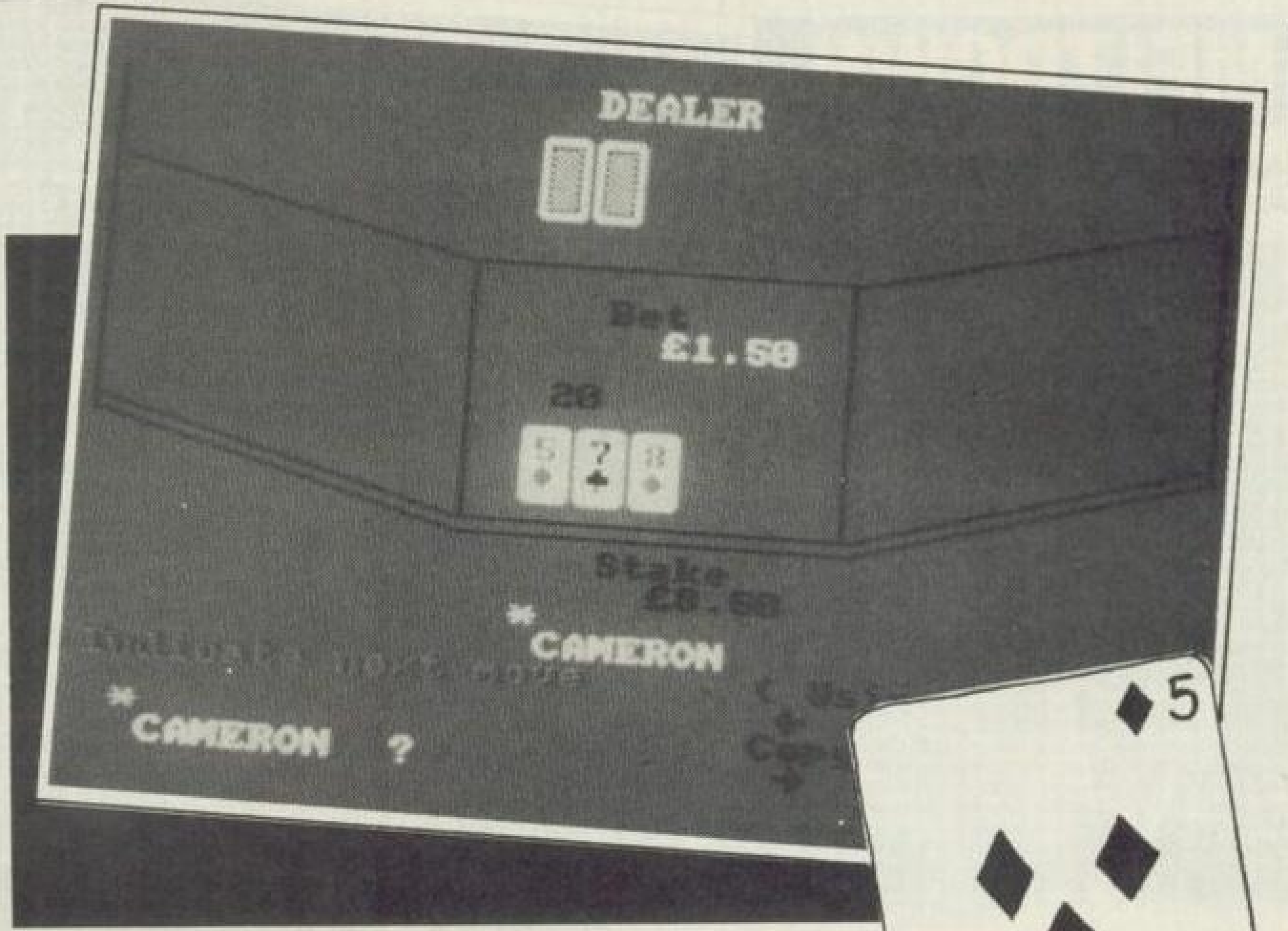
Value for money 85%
18 mini games and three mini games as well.

Overall 84%
Something for everyone.

SHUFFLE

Alpha, £4.95 cass

The days of shuffling your way through a noticeably less than fresh pack of cards on a dull, lonely Sunday afternoon, to play a game of patience, only to find there's one card missing, are now over. With Alpha's *Shuffle* you have nine card games on a cassette with which to while away the warm, late summer evenings. Side one of the cassette holds five games and once loaded it is possible to pick and choose which game to play by accessing the main menu at any time during a game. These games are mainly solitaire derivatives with normal column patience being the first game with clock and row solitaire. The last game, however, is pairs where you must turn two cards over and if they are not a pair either let your human opponent have their go or if playing alone, increase the displayed number of attempts that you've had so far.



Richard

CRITICISM

CRL's budget label Alpha, is not widely known nor respected for quality products but SHUFFLE should do much to gain a little creedence for them. The graphics are not brilliant but cards are clearly marked and easy to recognise. The on screen instructions are surprisingly succinct and useful, allowing you to get straight into your chosen game without referring to the confusing inlay. It provided me with a very easy way to learn a few variants of patience that I didn't know already. Unfortunately, I feel the price of £5.95 is on the high side when you could always buy a pack of cards for well less than a king's ransom and play the games yourself.

Once a game is chosen from the main menu, play moves to the green of a card table. The cards to be used are first shuffled, cut and finally dealt to appease the most hardened of card cynics. Once they are laid out in the particular format for the game chosen, then the on screen instructions indicate how to input the various commands. Some games, like clock patience, have the luxury of being able to to played using the joystick but all games can be played via the keyboard. When playing column like games a number appears above each column and instructions are then inputted using the *numbers above each column. For* example, if there is a card in column 4 that can be moved to column 1 the command is duly entered in the form of 4 followed by 1. This will move the card from 4 and put it in the required position in column 1 if the move is legal. If it isn't, the computer will refuse to move the card, reminding the player which card they wanted to move to which column, and telling them that the move was impossible anyway.

Side two of the cassette is filled with yet more card games, four to be precise and covers some of the less well known hybrids of Solitaire games.

Carpet Solitaire is so called because the object is to build ascending suits of cards on the aces to the kings from a 'carpet' of twenty upturned cards in four rows of five cards each. All cards in the carpet can be moved to the ace stacks in the correct ascending order and as they are used replacements take their positions from the remaining cards which are turned over each time play halts, thus filling the holes in the *carpet. Hence the name, brilliant* eh?

Paul

CRITICISM

I was also a bit dubious when I saw the Alpha Omega label on this game after seeing some of their Commodore products, but after picking up the joystick, yes joystick, and playing several games it began to grow on me. Ok, so the graphics are nothing to marvel at, and the sound is restricted to a few mediocre bleeps and burps, but nevertheless it is basically a fun game which should have a wide appeal, unfortunately I can not see many discerning punters forking out six quid for it.

Raglan is similar to normal patience with nine rows of cards in descending order from nine cards in the first column down to one in the last. All cards are overturned and only one card can be moved at a time. The aces are set out to the right of the screen and the six remaining cards are face up at the bottom of the screen and can be used at any time. The object is to get as many cards onto the aces as possible and scores show the percentage of cards successfully moved onto the aces.

Sultan uses two packs of cards and the computer will include another pack for you. Cards are set out with the king of hearts in the centre of the seven other kings and an ace of hearts all of which surround him. The idea of Sultan is to build on the other kings and one ace in order to finish the game with all the queens surrounding him and making his harem of wives completely formed around him, presumably to keep the eight mother-in-laws at bay.

The last game is Blackjack. This can be played alone or with up to two other players, choosing the number of players from the main menu. The computer takes on the enviable position of Banker and dealer with unlimited funds. Players unfortunately begin the game much poorer with only ten pounds with which to bet in multiples of fifty pence. The object of the game is, of course, to beat the banks hand up to a total of twenty one. The bank also pays odds on specific hands with evens payout up to twenty one, two to one for a natural which is an ace and a ten or five cards. Three to one is paid out for the lucky person that makes a royal which is done with three sevens. Cards can be bought for the value of the player's initial bet or just twisted. The rest is up to you but if the loss of a tenner comes quickly, the benevolent bank will continue to deal that player hands, if only for the look of disgust that comes to the face when, after losing a tenner, the bank starts dealing decent hands! But then, that's the gamble you'll have to take.

anthony

CRITICISM

I'm obviously a born gambler for I thoroughly enjoyed this game. I was quickly hooked on it and spent many hours playing both Carpet and Clock Solitaire. I was not impressed with the graphics or the sound. I think the game is highly priced and probably would be more successful if sold cheaper. Having said that it is a great aid to learning more card games.

Presentation 60%
Clear instructions, generally good.

Graphics 42%
Not spectacular, but serve their purpose.

Sound 31%
Limited squeaks.

Playability 70%
Easy to get into and plays well.

Addictive qualities 45%
You may not return to the computer often, but you can always play the games with cards.

Value for money 45%
Would appeal more widely if it was around the £2 mark.

Overall 48%
Helpful if you want to learn more about card games.

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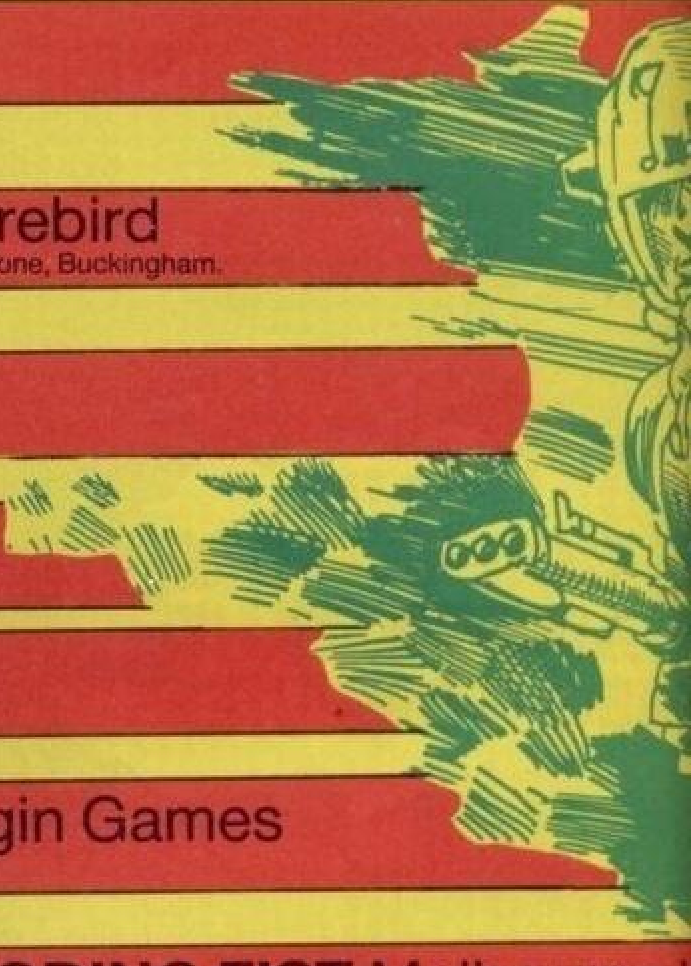
ROYALTIES FOR HIGH QUALIT

AMTIX! TOP TWENTY FOR SEPTEM

Here we go again, the Top 20 as decided by AMTIX! readers. The figures in brackets are last month's positions.



1 *(9)* SPINDIZZY Electric Dreams
243,678 Martyn Walker, Pontefract, West Yorkshire.

2 *(1)* YIE AR KUNG FU Imagine
99,857,960 M. Knight, Harrow, Middlesex

3 *(2)* ELITE Firebird
450,598.6 Credits Jonathon Stone, Buckingham.

4 *(12)* GET DEXTER Pss/Ere
200,000 Neil C Bligh, Sunbury-On-Thames, Surrey

5 *(4)* WHO DARES WINS II Alligator
542,240 Nick Greatrex, Old Alresford, Hampshire

6 *(10)* BATMAN Ocean
5,108 Antony Howard, Crossens, Merseyside

7 *(6)* SORCERY PLUS Virgin Games
153,320 Jacob Katbora, 3520 Farum, Denmark

8 *(3)* WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST Melbourne
90,000,000 Robert Wilson, Glenburn, Scotland

9 *(11)* SPELLBOUND Mastertronic
100% John Howe, Hartlepool, Cleveland

10 *(13)* WAY O
Completed J Smith, Chaddesdon,

11 *(16)* WINTER GAMES US Gold

12 *(7)* BRU
9,165,750 Michael Nich

13 *(-)* 3D GRAND PRIX Amsoft
15, 762 Stuart Montgomery, London

14 *(-)* BOM
1,755,800 Paul Smith,

15 *(-)* PING PONG Imagine
23,380 Carl Winder, Hollins, Lancs

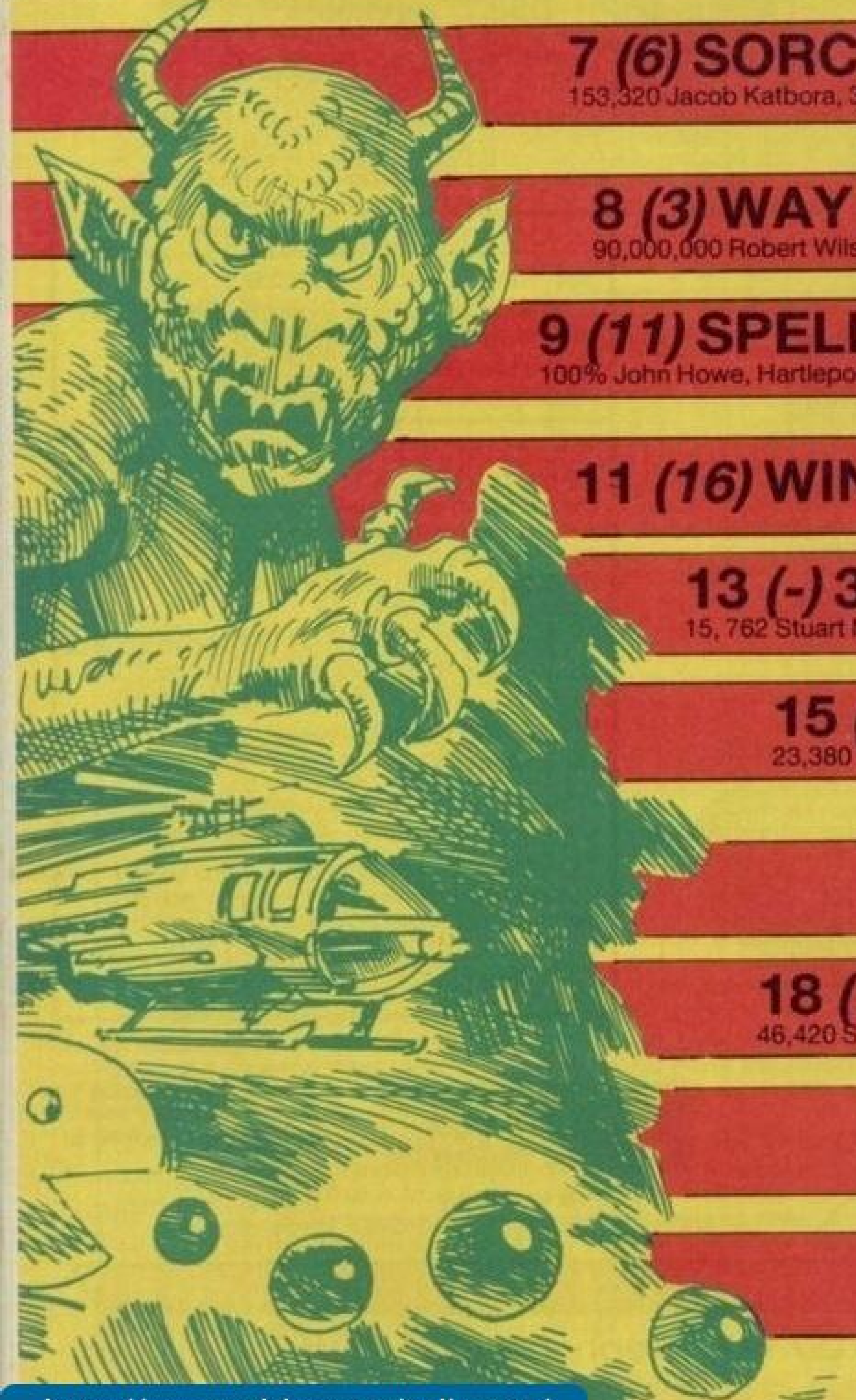
16 *(5)* CO
371,800 Kenneth Rea

17 *(-)* RAMBO Ocean
353,100 Ian Dagg, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire

18 *(14)* HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER Vortex
46,420 S Rishton, Bolton

19 *(17)* KNIGHT LORE Ultimate
Completed. John Bergent, Norway

20 *(-)* GREEN BERET Imagine
345,360 Scott Lonie, Doncaster, South Yorkshire



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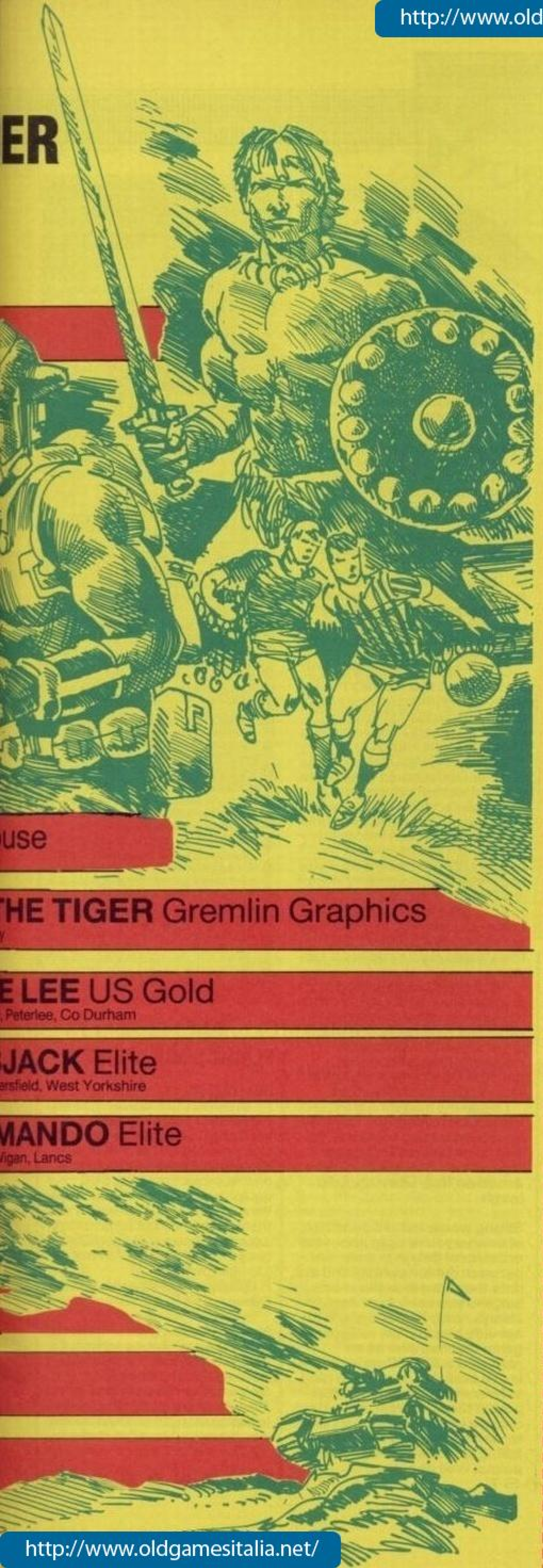


use

THE TIGER Gremlin Graphics

y

E LEE US Gold

, Peterlee, Co Durham

JACK Elite

ersfield, West Yorkshire

MANDO Elite

Vigan, Lancs

TOP TWENTY TWITTERS

A very big THANKS to all of you AMTIX! groupies who voted this month, we don't mind if you don't agree with our joystick junkies. That's what democracy is all about - people arguing and disagreeing all the time!. Keep your forms rolling in, that's important if the chart is to be representative.

At last *Yie Ar Kung Fu* has been pushed from its top slot to be replaced by the AMTIX! Accoladed *Spindizzy*, a big cheer for **Electric Dreams**. Four new entries this month and a re-entry for the ageing *3D Grand Prix*.

It's most important to fill in your scores, if you want a mention in the Top Twenty, even more so now we can reveal the forthcoming event of the AMTIX! Challenge. Do fill in all the form, we noticed some people have been skipping bits, now that's very naughty, so fill in all of it, y'hear?

VOTE AND WIN £40 OF SOFTWARE

Every month us generous types here at AMTIX! Towers will be awarding the grand sum of £40 worth of software to the lucky reader whose form is drawn from Uncle Malcolm's toupee (sic). In addition the next four readers forms drawn will have their very own AMTIX! T Shirts and hats to love and to cherish.

This month the lucky reader who wins the £40 of software is Jorn Berget all the way from Norway. (Somewhere south of Milton Keynes anyway). T-Shirts and hats will soon be winging their way to, **S Rishton from Bolton**, **Stuart Montgomery from London**, **Ian Dagg from Stoke Poges** and **M Knight from Middlesex**. Well done you lot and could you all write to Auntie Aggie with your chest sizes for the T-Shirts.

Remember, voting is simplicty itself and will only cost you the price of a stamp. Just fill in the form, all of it, and list your five favourite games in descending order with the best a number one. If you don't want to cut up your precious copy of AMTIX! write all the details on to a postcard or the back of an envelope, or you can always photocopy the form. Whatever you do, do it right!. Please!

AMTIX! READERS TOP TWENTY CHART VOTING FORM

Please write in CAPS in an eyestrain free manner.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

The World's five hippest games in order of preference are:

TITLE

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

4 ....

5 ....

From one of the five games above select one and give us your high score:

TITLE ....

ACHIEVEMENT ....

My machine is a 464/664/6128/8256 (delete as applicable).If I am a winner the game I would like is:

....

Send your coupon to:

AMTIX! TOP TWENTY, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

SAFFRON TREVASKIS IS ON THE SPOT

Lordy me, the AMTIX! ranks have been swelling visibly recently and this month we welcome yet another person to join the team; but wait, what's this? A girlie? A great big soppy girlie? Here at Chateau AMTIX!? Yes I'm afraid it's true, all too true. Saffron Trevaskis joins the ever expanding team as official OTS editor. The mysterious OTS team have disappeared into the Ludlow marshes after being threatened by an umbrella wielding Ms Trevaskis.

Right, you can stop that straight away, we'll have none of this soppy girlie nonsense here, no by golly, (But y'know, luvvies, if you do have any nagging little problems then Auntie Saffron's shoulder will always be here to cry on). Letters are what I came for and it's letters you're going to get, with the occasional answer if I'm in the mood. Keep your comments coming, else I'll be out of a job, and send them to:

Saffron Trevaskis
AMTIX!
PO Box 10
Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 1DB

While you are doing that I'll just run round to Lloyd Mangram's desk and pinch his 1922 Hermes typewriter, (These 8256s play havoc with my nails.) to bring you the first all girlie OTS, let 'em roll. The writer of the first letter wins a voucher for £20 of software.

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR IMPOVERISHED AMSTERS!

Dear Amtix

I have been reading Amtix! since issue one, altogether I think it's brilliant and I hope you have future success. But it makes my blood boil to read in every edition of nearly every page (well some of the pages) something telling us we should get a fantastic new printer or disk drive or a lightpen or (here I go again) all those new costly games).

We are not all adults with jobs or eccentric millionaires, not all of us can afford these things. We're just plain kids remember. How are we supposed to afford such high priced things. It's no wonder there are so many people illegally copying games. I get a pound a week to put towards a game and it takes me ages to save up for one. Why can't the games be cheaper like the ones for the Spectrum and Commodore?

I do hope software and hardware producers will lower their prices in the future. Meanwhile could you please, please, please, I beg you, run more competitions. The numbers of them has gradually declined since the first issue.

Russell Platt, Crewe, Cheshire

Again another old problem. Yes, there is a general feeling that games tend to get a bit pricey, even us eccentric millionaires think so. Take a look at the Mastertronic/Firebird Silver stuff some of it is really excellent, especially the recently released *Knight Tyme*. There is not really anything I can do, but this is an opportunity to make a desperate plea about the price of games, so if you are concerned drop me a line here at Amtix!. Power of the people and all that y'know. There is a general feeling at AMTIX! Towers that four competitions per issue is sufficient.

ST

YOU'RE THE BEST AMSTRAD MAGAZINE

Dear Amtix!

Congratulations on being the best Amstrad magazine around. Soon it will be up with Crash and Zzap! 64 on the circulation front. I have only recently bought my CPC464 and only have a few games at present. Luckily the first game I bought was *Get Dexter*— well done **Ere** and **PSS**.

I also have a Spectrum which has given me many years good service and I still believe it is a brilliant computer and I use it quite a lot. I have been reading Crash and Amtix! since their first issues and I have the first six issues of Zzap! which I had to give up through lack of funds but I still read my Commodore owning friend's copy.

One of my main reasons for writing is the fact that it is very hard to get hold of Amstrad software compared to Spectrum software— even in Edinburgh. For instance *Three Weeks in Paradise*, *Strangeloop*, *Who Dares Wins II* and *Get Dexter* haven't appeared in any of the major stores yet (I got *Get Dexter* and *WDWII* in a small, out of the way shop miles from my home—and it doesn't stock many either). Also *Spindizzy* didn't appear until two months after you had reviewed it. Admittedly *Way of the Tiger*, *Rambo*, *Nomad*, *Commando* and a few others appeared before you reviewed them but they are all heavily advertised. Still there's always your mail order service.

Another reason for writing is to say how much better you are than the other Amstrad magazines— especially Amstrad Action which is just a load of hypercritical reviewers, crap artwork (not a patch on Oliver Frey's work) and ideas copied from Newsfield.

Overall the magazine is excellent but the reviews (the way they have been set out) could well do with reverting back to their old style.

Jonathan Hall, Liberton, Edinburgh

Strong words indeed Jonathan, of course you're right about the occasional delays in software between the review date and the date they appear in the shops but, like you said, Aunt Aggie is always ready in mail order with her Jiffy bag and we sell any game that has ever been reviewed in AMTIX!, as long as it is still available. I was also glad to hear of your continued support of the Spectrum, so many owners of other computers tend to slag off their old machines, failing to realise their good points. Well done!

ST

AMTIX! DESERVES A MASCOT

Dear Amtix!

After reading AMTIX! for the first time, ie issue 8, I was amazed to find that a large proportion of your letters weren't from Amstrad owners but from the owners of other machines to 'ours'. Yes I do understand that these magazines are your sister publications but it is not, in my opinion, fair to compare this magazine to them and vice versa. I nearly put pen to paper there and then but I decided not to and waited to see how issue 9 would turn out. I'm glad I did. What an improvement it was. There were more genuine views on Amstrads and AMTIX! and I was impressed by the change, still an improvement could be made by devoting more space to game reviews.

I think a mascot would be a great idea. My vote goes to magic knight. That reminds me, what happened to the second part of the *Spellbound* tips as promised in Amtips in issue 8. I eagerly awaited them but alas they weren't there. And now to my final point can anyone tell me which four games are on the Amtix! Accolade cassette?

Adrian Rose, Heage, Derbyshire

We can only review as many games as we receive, but I do promise that if companies don't send their games I will prod them very hard with my umbrella; that usually does the trick. A mascot? hmm, yes MK might be quite fun. I was also wondering what happened to the *Spellbound* tips, excuse me I'll prod Jaz and ask him. He says it's all your fault, he was never sent any further tips and so that's why they were not printed. Understand?. Finally, no, I can't tell you what will be on the AMTIX! compilation, they won't tell us yet!

ST

FLIGHT SIMULATIONS

Dear AMTIX!

As an owner of a 6128 can you help me please? My family are interested in obtaining a tape or disk covering civil aircraft flight simulation. I have seen software on this subject covering BBC equipment, but cannot locate anything for Amstrad. I am aware that there are games involving military aircraft, but surely someone produces for the benefit of potential 'Jumbo' pilots.

R E Jeffery, Eastbourne, East Sussex

Now, as far as I can remember, there are any games covering civil simulations, but why not have a look at games like *Spitfire 40* or the undying *Fighter Pilot*, they are good simulations in their own right with the added excitement of combat routines.

ST

WHERE'S MY PRIZES . . . ?

Dear Amtix
Some weeks ago, I opened my March copy and wow! Yes after all the competitions I had entered I saw on the results page that I had won not one, or two, but THREE prizes. These are the giant Airfix model (*Battle of Britain* competition), a copy of Juggernaut and a copy of *Steve Davis Snooker*.

For three weeks I eagerly waited for my prizes. Then my Mum rang you up to be told that I should get them within the next fortnight or so.

I have STILL not received ANY of my prizes. Where are they?

Oh, by the way, the mag is excellent!

Jonathan Williams, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4JH

Ooo, you lucky thing, winning three competitions. The only time I won a competition in a magazine was a week before the company went bust, I lead that sort of life. I'm sure that won't happen here though, we merely pass on the winning names to the companies sponsoring the comps, so if you are having problems then give the companies a ring and hassle them. Only be very nice about it.
ST

. . . AND WHERE ARE MINE?

Dear Minion
Imagine my overwhelming appreciation and admiration of the vitally important work you do for us poor AMTIX! readers, when I saw my name appear as one of the lucky Readers' Awards voters!! An AMTIX! T-SHIRT (medium), £15 software voucher (*Hitch-Hikers Guide* here we come!), fame, glory and awed reverence from my work colleagues. Much, much manna!!!

Now 4 weeks later, imagine my disallusionment and disappointment as the aforementioned goodies have still failed to arrive!!

You are now in imminent danger of dropping from my TOP 10 favourite people list, so you had better hurry and get the Goodies in the post!

To recompense me for my long, frustrating wait, I will quite understand if you decide to send me an AMTIX! Sweatshirt (medium), instead of the AMTIX! T-Shirt (medium) to help see me through another cold, dreary British summer!!

Brian Edmunds, Goldings, Northampton

Once more, big sorries all round to people who still haven't got their prizipoos, but hang in there and they'll be forthcoming, eventually. Oh, and I am assured that it is going to be a fine summer so you won't need a sweatshirt, in fact I've heard you look very dashing in a T-shirt, especially a glorious AMTIX! one.
ST

IS THIS GAME AVAILABLE?

Dear AMTIX!
I was wondering if it was possible to get the excellent arcade game *Rally X* for the Amstrad CPC464? If not, are there plans to market it in the future?
Anne Henderson, Cambridge

Er, no, sorry Anne, luvvie, it's no to both!
ST

WHAT ABOUT A FREE GIFT?

Dear Sirs
I think your magazine is great, but why don't you give away free gifts like Amstrad Action which I also read. The main reason why I am writing to you, is that I do not like *The Hobbit* because of its awful bugs, I am sending it back to **Melbourne House** requesting a refund. Keep up the good work.
Robert Adler, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham

Right for a start off, I'm a Ms, and definitely not a plural one at that!. On to the free gifts, well Chrissy isn't all that far away, and then we'll be giving a whole new magazine away, totally free, it'll be written by that hunky brute from Crash and Zzap!, Lloyd Mangram, and looks as if it is the start of something big! (A bit like Lloyds . . . (cont. on page 202)). This is the first leak so I can't give you any more details at the moment else the Ludlow mafia will be onto me, but remember who told you first. Yes, it is a pity about *The Hobbit*, if you do get a refund try *The Boggit* which is a spoof on the Tolkien classic, it might prove a laugh if nothing else.
ST

AN IDEA TO CONSIDER?

Dear Amtix
I think I have found the solution to over-expensive software, and software piracy! I was wondering if it was possible to have software graded before being released. Thus, the authorities could price the software in relation to its quality. Then computer owners would know if the software they are considering buying is really worth it!
Omar Ahmad, London
PS To play *Ghostbusters* on keyboard, using cursor-keys, go on to Equipment Selection, then press 'copy' to load and unload equipment from the forklift. Then use the cursor keys as normal.

Hmm, yes it's a great idea, but no doubt software companies would hate the idea, so I can't see it catching on. Oh well, another brilliant scheme up the spout. Ho hum
ST

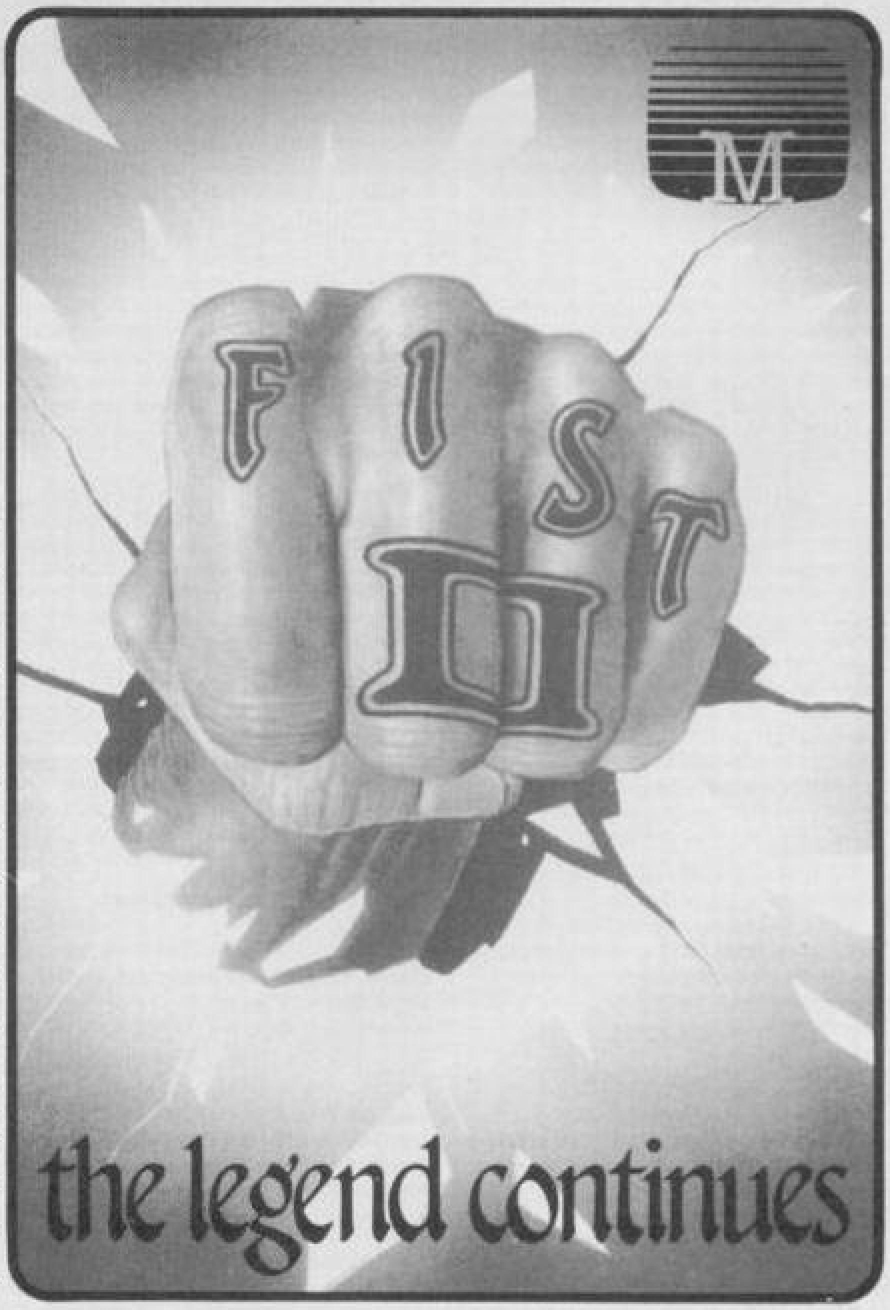
PUTTING THE OTHERS TO SHAME IN DENMARK

Dear OTS
I have a question for you. Could you come out with a bad issue of AMTIX! because all the other computer mags (especially Amstrad mags) here in Denmark are getting nervous breakdowns because of you. They just can't keep up with your standards. So guys, go a little easy on them will you?

Now to the less serious part of my letter. A couple of months ago I bought that fabulous game writing utility from **Ocean** and **Oasis**. Yes, you've guessed it, *Laser Basic*. And in the past few months I've done some serious studying which has resulted in quite a few games, of which most of them, in my own opinion, beat all existing ones. I believe I am ready to go for a big one, and if that turns out to be something that somebody might like, then I plan to invest in the *Laser Basic Compiler* and maybe publish the game. Can you tell me if the *Laser Basic Compiler* compiles Laser B to pure machine code? If so, is it just as fast as 'real' machine code' and if not, to what does it compile it?

My second question is about sprites. We all know, that to make a good game you need good sprites. I am not a gifted artist, so I don't draw great sprites (they tend to be square characters and jerky animation). I would like to know if you can buy hard copies of sprites from software houses and if you can, what does it cost?
Flemming Vang Eskildsen,
Lyngparken 22, 6670 Holsted,
Denmark

No we most certainly won't come out with a bad issue, Flemming, the mere thought makes my stockings wrinkle, in fact AMTIX! will get better so keep reading. On to your next point Laser Compiler does convert BASIC and Laser Basic to pure Z80 code and incorporates two run time systems into your code so that sprites may be used. It is really best to design your own sprites, but if you don't feel confident then I'm sure you can find some arty friend as software companies don't take too kindly to their ideas being pinched.
ST



ON·THE·SPOT

GREEN SCREEN COMMENT . . .

Dear OTS
After reading your brilliant magazine for the very first time I can only find one thing wrong with it. And that is you don't give a description on the game you are reviewing on a green screen. You should tell us Green Monitor owners who cannot afford a modulator what a game looks like on the green screen.
Derek Squire, Mirfield, West Yorkshire

Well, Derek, I think I'll be needing a new umbrella it has been in so much use recently. I've been prodding around the Powers That Be and they tell me that a Green Screen comment could well be on the way, along with all the other marvellous changes that are about to take place, for example did you know that my new mate, Lloyd . . . (Shuddup-Ed). Sorry I just got a bit carried away then, yes a GS view is well on it's way.
ST

. . . AND FURTHER COMMENT

Dear On The Spot
Every month I get two Amstrad magazines, AMTIX! and Amstrad Action. By far the best is of course AMTIX! but as a green monitor owner I find I buy A A mainly because with their reviewed games they include a Green Screen box which tells the reader what the reviewed game is like on a green screen.

So do you think you could print a Green Screen box in AMTIX! as a lot of people own green screens I think this would be a good idea.
Shaun Duck, Hilperton Marsh, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

You too eh?, right then that's settled, as soon as I can find a green screen I'll be prodding the Leep, our new Software Ed, to write a green screen view in reviews. Jaz says you must be silly not to have a colour monitor. Now who says I can't be persuasive?
ST

COMPANIES SHOULD PLAY FAIR

Dear AMTIX!
I'm writing to complain about the old problem of release dates. I'm sick to death of software firms placing misleading adverts in magazines. For example: *Street Hawk*, **Ocean**, advertised, June 1985 Released: Not yet — that's for sure. *Knight Rider*— **Ocean**, advertised July 1985, Release date; will it EVER be released?

The list goes on and on. More recently and I use that word in its widest context — there are games such as *Superbowl XX* by **Ocean** (again!): the release date was going to be January 1986 but it is still not out.

I know that software houses have a hard schedule to follow, but they could at least make sure the game is almost complete when they advertise. Gold stars go to **The Edge** for releasing *Fairlight* when it was advertised, and full marks to **Gremlin** for not advertising *Way of the Tiger* before it was released.

And the moral of the story is if a release date is confirmed for May 1986, wait another six months before it appears on the shelves of all leading software stockists.
Nick Stokes, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

Yes, I know, it's an old problem and it doesn't only upset the public but also the publishers as well. If a programmer promises a program in, say, three months then the publishers, like Ocean, advertise for that deadline, but if the program misses it's promotional 'window' then the advertising has been wasted and so has a lot of money. So, do have a bit of sympathy with companies like Ocean and support the product when it is eventually released.
ST

WHAT A PRETTY EFFECT!

Dear OTS
Firstly let me say that I truly think your magazine is brilliant. I used to buy C and V G but every edition was saturated in adverts to the extent of insanity, also their reviews were too short.

With reference to the issue of testing games on a green screen monitor, could you not use some transparent green plastic like the old ZX81 'professional looking screen display'?

Now to the main point of my letter. If you want to see some psychadelic effects on your straddles try the following:- Reset the computer Type Call 17 (ENTER) Call 20 (ENTER)

Certain variations of calls between 17 and 19 ending with 20 cause the screen display to go to pieces literally and call 24 'decomposes' the text. Can you provide any explanation for this? Lastly is it true that **Elite** have shelved plans to launch *International Basketball* on the straddles?
Andrew Durrant, Benfleet, Essex

Golly, that was rather an exciting effect. (Yawn). No I can't and won't give you an explanation why it does that. (She doesn't know, she's thick.-Ed) As far as I can gather *International Basketball* is still on the way but is suffering from the now famous *Street Hawk* syndrome. One day over the rainbow . . .
ST

ENHANCED VERSIONS WANTED

Dear OTS
With the arrival of the Spectrum 128 there has been a lot of 128 only software making full use of the extra memory. Being a 6128 owner I am naturally wondering why my computer is not receiving the same treatment. With the exception of **Alligata**'s *Meltdown* (which looks a bit slow). I don't know of any plans for enhanced versions.

Also it isn't just the 6128 but also the 464 and 664 that have more memory than the Spectrum 48 yet we usually pay more for the same game.

If you have any influence over software houses could you tell them to have a go at enhanced versions?
Jolyon Friedhoff, Oxford, Oxon
PS **Virgin Games** in Oxford Street is a very good shop which gets software in early and *Spindizzy*'s Paul Shirley wrote *Quack a Jack*

Now, don't get in such a flap, there a quite a few games, and lots of 128 only utilities, on the 6128, probably more than the Speccy 128. Yes, we do often have to pay more for a game, I am not quite sure why but it probably has something to do with the fact that we Amstradders are willing to spend several hundred pounds on the machine, and so companies think we can afford games that are more expensive. Views please. By the way, I haven't got the slightest piece of influence, but I could try wielding my umbrella at the companies in question.
ST

AMTIX! FILLS THE VOID IN MALTA

Dear Sir
Congratulations for the much awaited Amstrad publication. Back here in Malta, where we do not enjoy the variety of magazines available in the UK, it has filled the void.

As I am more interested in educational/technical program/information I hope that the sections relating to the above will be expanded in future.

Under separate mail I have enclosed an order form for 2 cassettes. Instead of a cheque or a postal order I have quoted my Barclaycard number which I hope is acceptable. This I find is more practical and I think this service should be made available to your readers.
Patrick Srinzo, St Julians, Malta.

Wait a tick, I'm no sir, me's a girlie, but then how were you to know?. Anthony Clarke has now taken over as Technobabble Editor so things will be operating under his watchful eye, and there's some real beauties to come.
ST

MAKE BETTER GAMES PLEA

Dear OTS
I have had my CPC464 for over a year and I am very pleased with it. Since April 85 I have bought many Amstrad magazines. I was looking through them the other day when I noticed the Sega range was still not available. Why don't software companies make games better? *Commando* on the Amstrad is not worth buying.
Stephen Trott, London

Now then Stephen, I've just been on the phone to U S Gold, who are supposed to be converting the Sega range onto the Amstrad, but they haven't got any firm details yet, but keep an eye on the news pages because that's where any details will appear. I think you're being a bit hard on *Commando*, it's a game that I have had great fun with, but then it's not everyone's cup of tea
ST

MY MONITOR BLUES

Dear OTS
What a brilliant magazine. Everything an AMSTRAD owner could want. A lot more than you can say for AA.

I want to ask you something but first the story: It's Christmas Eve the one just gone. I've gone to bed. I'm waiting for tomorrow. I wake up and go downstairs and lo and behold there was my CPC6128 wrapped up. I open it, set it out and, oh no they have given me the wrong monitor. So I couldn't use my disk drive.

After months of asking Currys to give me the proper monitor it duly arrived. Is this Amstrad's fault or the shop's? Now I've got my disk-drive working I tried it out and put one side on and a brilliant demo of what the Amstrad can do appeared. So I put the other side on and it said disk missing. Can you help me?

Also you should have a pen-pals' section in Amtix!. And could you print my full address and ask readers if they would like to write to me and be a pen-pal?

Keep up the good work on the brilliant magazine.
Jonathan Boyd, Frizington, Cumbria

Pen pals do appear on the User Club page courtesy of Uncle Malcolm. Write to him again! It's the usual address but you should indicate it is intended for the Pen pal spot.

It's difficult to know who to blame about your monitor, but it is likely Currys just got a wee bit confused, things are pretty chaotic at Chrissy y'know, but you've got it now so smiles all round eh?, no?. Oh dear, your Amstrad told you there was a disk missing when it was there. Try other disks to make sure, if it is a real fault complain. Very loudly.
ST

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ON-THE-SPOT

SHORT OF GAMES DOWN UNDER

Dear AMTIX!
I live in Australia and I own an Amstrad CPC664 (with colour monitor). I've just started to read your magazine and thought I'd use it to have a moan. It's about the lack of software. I would like to know the price and postage for games in mail order. in the magazine I read the reviews of the games and it's disheartening to see these games in England and it takes 6 or 7 months to be available in Australia. On the Amstrad is there a game called *Bombjack*? Can the 664 handle the games on the 6128?

Can you tell me what book would tell me how to programme games. Another problem is I've got a game of *Marsport* and one side has a problem and you can't copy it so how do I deal with this problem. How much does *Spindizzy* cost and *Gyroscope* cost? I think AMTIX! is very informative and a great magazine (I think it's the best computer magazine)!! Keep up the good work!!
Jason Raynar, 18 Cavendish Drive, Deer Park, 3023, Melbourne, Victoria.

Golly, aren't you an inquisitive little thing, Jason. Right, mail order, ur, dunno. Hold on I'll whip upstairs and ask Auntie Aggie. Won't be a tick . . . Le pant, le phew, it's a hard climb up them stairs, but still, for a reader it's worth it. When you order from Australia add an extra 70p PER ITEM, and that's all you have to do, simple huh?. If you want to get into programming games you might be better off buying *The Graphic Adventure Creator* or *Laser Basic* rather than wading through reams of technobabble it can be very difficult. *Spindizzy* is £9.95 and *Gyroscope* is £8.95, happy?. Good.
ST

ANY CPC464'S OUT THERE?

Dear Amtix
Could you please tell me if the Amstrad CPC464 is still being made, as none of the shops seem to have them in stock. If there are some shops that you know of that have them, would you please let me know. Also is their future very certain, or are they being discontinued?
Terry Murphy, Holloway, London

You can buy a CPC464 from your local Currys or any local independent store, look them up in the Yellow pages. As to their future who knows? It all depends on one Alan Michael Sugar. Logic dictates they shouldn't be dropped, but if he does I will personally phone him up and give him a good ticking off.
ST

WHERE IS THIS GAME?

Dear Amtix!
Thanks for the great mag but one problem I noticed that in your March issue page 57 there is an advertisement for *Back To The Future* The computer game. In this advertisement you say 'Available on Spectrum 48K, Commodore 64 and Amstrad from **Electric Dreams** software'. And the address and telephone number so I went on a search for this computer game. I first looked in Boots but they hadn't got it so I tried Harpers and they said that they hadn't got it, so I went home and phoned **Electric Dreams** software, and asked where I could get 'Back to the future' and they said 'were sorry that you cannot find 'Back to the future' in the shops it is because it hasn't been released yet because our programmers are having trouble with the program so the release date has been postponed for the Amstrad but it has already been released for the Spectrum 48K and Commodore 64.' And with this they gave me the address of their parent company which is **Activision** and I have yet to write to them so before advertising check that they have been released.
S Green, Woking, Surrey GU21 2NW

Ah yes, this is a familiar problem, but as I have said before, we have little power in what the advertisements say. However, the trend of releasing the Amstrad version of a game later is gradually disappearing and hopefully all formats of a game will be released at the same time. Here's hoping.
ST

WHAT'S THE CHEAT MODE?

Dear Amtix
I have recently purchased *Spindizzy* from **Electric Dreams**. The game is brilliant, except it states there is a cheat-mode. However I cannot find it so I decided to phone you. The lady who took my call told me to write, so here I am! So could you please send me instructions on the cheat-mode.
Martin Pratt, London Colney, Hertfordshire

Er, no, oh, hold on I'll ask Jazzababes, er, no, he doesn't know either as such, but he promises there'll be some pokes on the way soon.
ST

NEWS ABOUT THE AMTIX! ACCOLADES

Dear OTS
First of all notice the perfecto setting out of the letter, I mean I don't do this for just anyone. Secondly the creeping, its a brill mag (I can't think of anything else to creep about). Now down to the dirty work, what and when is the compilation AMTIX ACCOLADES, coming out? I've seen the Zzap Sizzler's and Crash Smashes. Oh, I've thought of some more creeping, I've bought every issue of AMTIX! including Issue 0 and an AMTIX! Binder, now back to the point what is going to be on the AMTIX ACCOLADES? If you've not decided yet then here's some hints. How about *Sorcery*, *Strike Force Harrier*, *NOMAD* and *Thing On A Spring* and when is this superb (More creeping) compilation being released. One last thing where on earth are *Scooby Doo*, *Street Hawk* and *Knight Games*?
Carl Goodwin, Fenton, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire

Gosh, my telephone talents have been in use today. When I rang Gremlin Graphics, they told me that the AMTIX! Compilation should be out around the first of October, but they wouldn't tell me what will be on the tape. The meanies. As for the Scooby Doo game, well, Gargoyle have been assigned with the task of writing that, and we should see it very soon. Um, er, Street Hawk, hah! When I'm sixty-four, maybe??
ST

AMSTRAD SCREEN SHOTS ONLY

Dear Amtix
It really annoys me when you don't say in the advertisements from what machine the screen shots are taken. Either publish Amstrads screen shots or not at all. How are we to know what machine they come from. What if we see what looks a really ace game and find that it is really duff and the adverts screen shots are from one of the other two unmentionables. Why should we suffer and have, say, Commodore shots when it's an Amstrad magazine. Can't we be different from Crash and Zzap?

Anyway, only one more niggle, where is the highscore table? Surely it should have this by now.

Keep up the good work.
Jamie Newton, Peterborough

Hold on Jamie dear, calm down. Don't blame us, it's the advertisers you should be writing to. We have little say in what the adverts actually say or show, but I do agree, Amstrad screen shots or nowt, hear, hear!. There is a small high score table, if you look, the best scores are printed under the name of the games in the charts, however we are soon to change that and introduce a real high score table, also an AMTIX! high score challenge, so watch out for more details soon.
ST

VICTIM OF PRATT ATTACK

Dear AMTIX!
As a victim of a pratt attack I am requesting the right to reply. A recent letter by A M of Coventry asked some very strange questions. Why do I read AMTIX? Well Mr (Mrs, Miss?) A M, Amstrad owners have a strange habit of buying Amstrad mags such as AMTIX!, you must find relating to the numbers 6128 rather difficult or you would have realised I own one. (And yes I will stick with CRASH, As every Spectrum owner should).

There was some confusion on A M's part, I like my Spectrum but I prefer my Amstrad (Quote by me: Marvellous Machine. Unquote) I was complaining that Amstrad owners think they are superior to everyone else, I agree the computer's great, but we don't need little kids playing Mr Macho. (My dad's bigger than your dad so there).

A M do you think the Amstrad Computer range would be out today if Sir Clive had never brought out the ZX81 and the Spectrum. I very much doubt it.

A M was wrong in another way. I did not refer to Amsters as Pratts but said, they were wallies who prattled on. Look prattle up in the dictionary A M. However, a new line has arisen. Amstrad has bought Sinclair Computers, which makes Amstrad and Spectrum owners directly related, so I hope this will unite owners of Amstrad and Sinclair Computers and we will all stop this computer rivalry. Well A M I hope we can start an Amstrad/Spectrum relationship by putting our differences behind us and (mentally) shake hands.
Kevin Hall, Norwich, Norfolk

I think your views speak for themselves and most of them are pretty sound, I also think this petty rivalry should stop, and if it doesn't Saffron will be round with her brolly, and we all know what that means!. (Only too well-Everybody)
ST

What an interesting bunch you all are, well most of you anyway. I like it here, so I think I'll stay, and anyone who thinks different will be brollied! Before I go I must mention BANG!, a fanzine, which I received. I've been jolly impressed and they have promised to send me their Summer special. If there are anymore Fanzines or Newsletters out there send them to me at the usual address and maybe I'll get round to writing a feature on them. Now I've finished I suppose I'd better return Lloyd's Hermes, mind you I could take it round to his house personally and then, well, who knows? Must fly . . .

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

Earlier this year we invited all you egghead readers to write a program to analyse the votes sent in for our Top 20 chart. The result was truly staggering and that, dear readers, is why Uncle Malcolm has been in a foul mood for some weeks now. He's been trying to decide upon a winner after spending days and days poring over the efforts produced by you whizzkids!

As you will recall the brief was as follows: your program had to be able to accept the input of each coupon with its five titles and allocate five points to the first game, four to the second, and so on, down to one point for the fifth one. It also had to keep a list of each title and the total number of points the title had been awarded. It also had to keep a count of the number of coupons entered, and at the end of the input, it should be able to PRINT out a list of the titles with the game getting the most points at the top, and likewise, the least at the bottom.

To make it more difficult the program had to be able to save the entries to tape or disk in case the comps minion wanted to take a kip, in other words it had to be idiot proof! The program had to check each of the five names on the coupon against the list it had built up, and any name not on it should be queried with a bleep and an idiot prompt. It had to be able to store up to 100 titles and, most important of all, the finished product had to be compatible with a CPC464 machine. Simple wasn't it?

Of course it was difficult. That's why it has taken Crumbly so long to sort it out but in the end he decided the £35 of software vouchers should go to David Hall. Unfortunately, he is such a whizzkid he forgot to include his address with his entry. The post mark on the envelope suggests he comes from the Manchester area so it would be nice if he can give us his address so he can get his goodies.

EDITOR ENFORCEMENT KIT COMPETITION

The editor enforcement kit proved to be a popular competition with you, the punters, and even our dear old Malcolm. He was well chuffed with his electronic strong right arm and has made life quite tough for everybody on AMTIX! since. We tried to make sure that the person who caused this unpleasant change in Malcolm's power rating didn't get a prize but old sneakyboots has taken over sending the prize out. One choice of computer, either an Amstrad PCW8256 word processor or a CPC6128 will be carefully winging its way to Nick Card, Cody Rd, GU14 0DX. Twelve people who almost won (or nearly lost for that matter) will all be getting an AMTIX! T Shirt. So well done to,

Chris Frazer, Seafield Rd, BH6 3JG; D Drury, Lincoln Rd, PE6 7HH; Timothy Hanitzsch, Chockleys Drive, TF1 4TS; Snders Johansen/DD, Allegade, 4690, Denmark; Robert S. Fox, Hawes Rd, BR1 3JR; Ray Girvan, Gillott Rd, B16 0RP; G Rogan, Kilburn Close, R63 7DH; W East, Chertsey Rise, SG2 9JF; Leo Vita-Finzi, Heath Hurst Rd, NW3 2RU; T Meredith, Triumph Close, CV2 5AR; Paul John Long, Blunts Hall Rd, CM8 1ER.

GARGOLYE MASTERPIECE COMPETITION

The Gargoyle Masterpiece comp saw a flood of entries from some of our more literary readers. Having to write three hundred words to add to my masterpeice must have been a pleasure for you, dear readers, even though it must've been hard work to guild a lily but then a buckshee weekend's adventuring with **Gargoyle Games** picking up the bill was a prize worth putting a bit of work in for. The winner did a very good job though and so a very well done to **Ray Girvan, of Birmingham** and have a nice hacking and slaying time.

Thirty runners up will have to be content to just hack away at their disk or tape versions of *Heavy on the Magick*. They are:

Stuart Low, Clacks', FK10 2ER; Matthew Welbourn, Beckford Rd, GL20 8NL; Gary Milner, Hawthorn Drive, NE32 4EQ; Benedict Forster, Nugent Rd, BH6 4ET; R G Messenger, Adernethy, PH2 9NE; Andrew Williams, Riccarton Drive, EH14 5PN; John Sholicar, Coronation Rd, GL52 3DA; Allan Price, Calverley Gardens, LS13 1HF; Steve Tilley, Cambridge, GL2 7AE; Michael Davies, Haverstock Hill, NW3; Robert Page, Mindale Rd, 4HP; Kevin Patton, Wharfedale, HP2 5TJ; Colin Broad, Kenwood Rd, OL1 2NY; Craig ZCoomber, Glenkindie, AB3 8SH; Eric Wilson, Eagles Lane, CB6 2TE; S Logan, Carlisle Rd, ML11 9RA; Mr E J McCran, Wellington Place, SN14 6HB; J Clement, Winsor Drive, Herts; Mark Wilson, Colling Rd, ME3 8SA; Jamie Cope, Manchester Rd, BB8 5QT; Robert Shepherd, Trusthorpe Rd, LN12 2LT; GJ Bostock, Westhoirland Rd, M31 1HN; M Feathers, Sanstone Lane, WS3 3SD; D Ramdenee, Frome, RM18 8TD; Pauline Hinton, Bosworth Gardens, RG5 3RS; Jason Scott, Gover Rd, SO1 9BR; Frazer Worley, Mill Street, Scotland; RL Sparkes, Sandholme Drive, BD10 8EY; Andrew Berry, Rayner Rd, HD6 4AY; Sean Leatherland, Bradwell Drive, NG5 9DW; Richard Nicholson, Yarmouth Rd, NR12 9RL.

MELBOURNE HOUSE'S SAY KWAH COMPETITION

We asked you to try saying Kwah and see what happens. Fifty lucky superheros all receive a copy of *Redhawk* the game for their interpretation of what happens when a superhero changes back into a wimp. The nifty fifty are . . .

Dat Phung, Craigmyle St, KY12 0BT; Matthew Hadfield, Melville Rd, DA14 4LU; Michael B Willims, Hackwood Park, NE46 1AX; Jan Szafranski, Benson Rd, CR0 4LR; Michael Pease, Nursery Close, NR6 5SL; Karen Marshall, Derby Rd, DE55 1BG; Roshan Jhowry, Himley Rd, SW17 9AG; Bard Paulsen, 1700 Kurland, Norway; Andrew Granville, Dalmuir Close, TS16 9HY; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; G Rogan, Kilburn Close, R63 7DH; Martin Gillibrand, Knightsdale Rd, Dorset; Michael Atherton, Rutherford Drive, BL5 1DJ; Stephen Humphreys, Boode Croft, L28 4EW; D Bullock, Charlwood Rd, LU4 0BU; M Welbourn, Beckford Rd, GL20 8NL; D Bingham, The Oval, NN15 6BA; A Rahaman, Lower Morden Lane, SM4 4SW; Eric Wilson, Eagles Lane, CB6 2TG; John Conway, Glen Esk Drive, G53 7QN; Glen Leishman, Cumbrae Gardens, M5 2DZ; John Burd, Sandcroft, TF7 4AD; Simon Ralfs, Fargandenny, PH2 9ET; Andrew Rahaman, Lower Morden Lane, SM4 4SW; Darren Green, Blunts Road, SE9 1HX; Mark Aldridge, South Meade, WA15 6QL; T Meredith, Triumph Close, CV2 5AR; Richard Nicholson, Yarmouth Rd, NR12 9RL; David Topliss, Wimmerfield Crescent, SA2 7DB; Ashley Thomas, Old Eign Hill, HR1 1UA; Jimmy Davies, Chelmerro, CM8 2EY; Stephen Holme, Counsall Rd, DY11 5YL; R Harrison, Ashgrove, CF4 1BE; Gordon Hayward, Brackendale Grove, LU3 2LT; Paul Williams, Denham Drive, TW15 2AN; Chris Berry, Cedar Way, RG23 8NG; Adam Wilson, Fodbank View, KY11 4UD; W East, Chertsey Rise, SG2 9JF; Jason Mealing, Arrendene Rd, CB9 9JQ; J Henderson, Lichfield Drive, TQ5 8DH; Neil Fenton, Govier Close, E15 4HW; Steve Painter, Queen Mary Avenue, SM4 4JS; Philip Harling, Worthing Road, RH13 7HA; Mr T S Hanitzsch, Chockleys Drive, TF1 4TS; Christopher Beltrami, Henryson Rd, SE4 1HL; David Arnett, Turner Rd, CV5 8FT; Andrew Restall, Pymgate Drive, SK8 3TR; Haran Swa, Franks Avenue, KT3 5DD; Michael Davies, Church Hill, WS12 5BQ; D Ramdenee, Frome, RM18 8TD

LIDDON'S LUNCH COMPETITION

The inimitable Mr Liddon has now taken his bovine carcass to pastures new as he is working for THALAMUS, Newsfield's own software house in London. Before he left though, we asked you to appease the graduate of the Cyril Smith school of gastronomy by finding out who nicked his lunch. The best case put forward, along with several pieces of evidence wasn't named but one of the exhibits included was a gun with silencer. If you'll get in touch we can send you your detective kit. No problem with the runners up though and thirty copies of CRL's *Robin of Sherlock* go to the following.

Harran Siva, Franks Ave, KT3 5DD; Billy McCreadie, Cornalee Road, G53 5AL; Andrew Eddleston, Nelson Close, TN16 3LS; GJ Bostock, Westmorland Rd, M31 1HN; Robert Shepherd, Trusthorpe Rd, LN12 2LT; Anthony Brady, Lonsdale Drive, ME10 1JJ; David Heath, Kensworth Close, Staffs; Paul Edwards, Mildway Rd, SG1 5TW; Christof Plumbe, 38 Salisbury Rd, B13 8JT; Tommy Abel, Arundel Rd, CR0 2ER; K Smith, Barwell Square, BL4 7TQ; John Burd, Anson Drive, YF1 4XW; William Hopkins, Ashford in-the-Water, DE54 1QF; Joanna Hart, Fulner CLose, TW12 3YP; Alexander Medawer, Heath Hurst Rd; NW3 2RU; Simon Gibbs, Green Lane, S18 6LN; Steven Dixon, Auckland Avenue, DL3 0LH; Caroline Carpenter, Tavistock Rd Weston-Super-Mare; I Ahmunda, Orlock Walk, Nottingham; Alan Gory, Chetwode Close, CV5 9NA; Christopher Smith, Giant Tree Hill, WD2 1HA; J Smith, Honeysuckle Rd, SO2 3BW; David Hall, Stothard Rd, M32 9HA; Justin Howlett, Stagsden, PE2 0PR; Daniel Ciddor, Boycott Avenue, Milton Keynes; Andrew Gladwell, Alexandra Rd, BH14 9EW; Willian Freeland, John Humble Street, EH22 5QZ; Daryl Ward, Newbury Close, LE8 2JJ; Richard Swan, Hengist Avenue, CT9 2UA; Stephen Spikings, New Bolingbroke, PE22 7JL

STARSHIP EQUINOX COMPETITION

Mikro-Gen were offering the complete collection of all their excellent games to the person who could design the best inter galactic spacecraft. Mark Humpage of Cotswold Avenue, NN5 6DR was the designer of the bestest spaceship that we received. Ten Amsters who were not quite good enough to win first prize will be receiving a copy of *Equinox*, squeezed through their letterbox in a little while. Letterbox vigils will be kept by:

J Szafranski, Benson Rd, CR0 4LR; An Dat Phung, Craigmore Street, KY12 0BT; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; Matthew Bagshaw, Morrison Terrace, NE46 4QE; GM Sellars, Inkerman St, PR2 2HN; Guy Van Heusen, Broadfield, RH19 4QR; Michael Wong, Alcester Rd, M33 3QP; Wayne East, Chertsey Rise, SG2 9JF; D Ramdenee, Frome, RM18 8TD; M Bichener, Sudeley Walk, MK41 8HS

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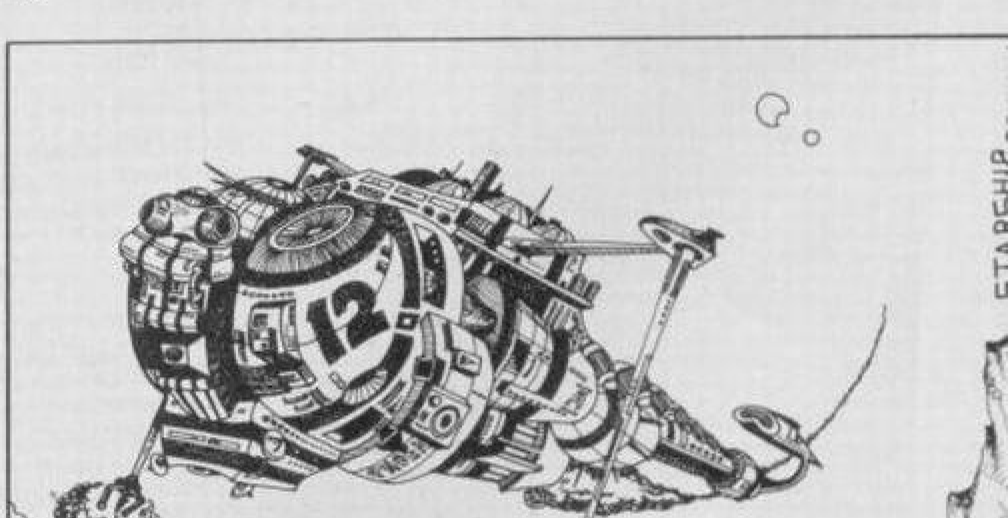

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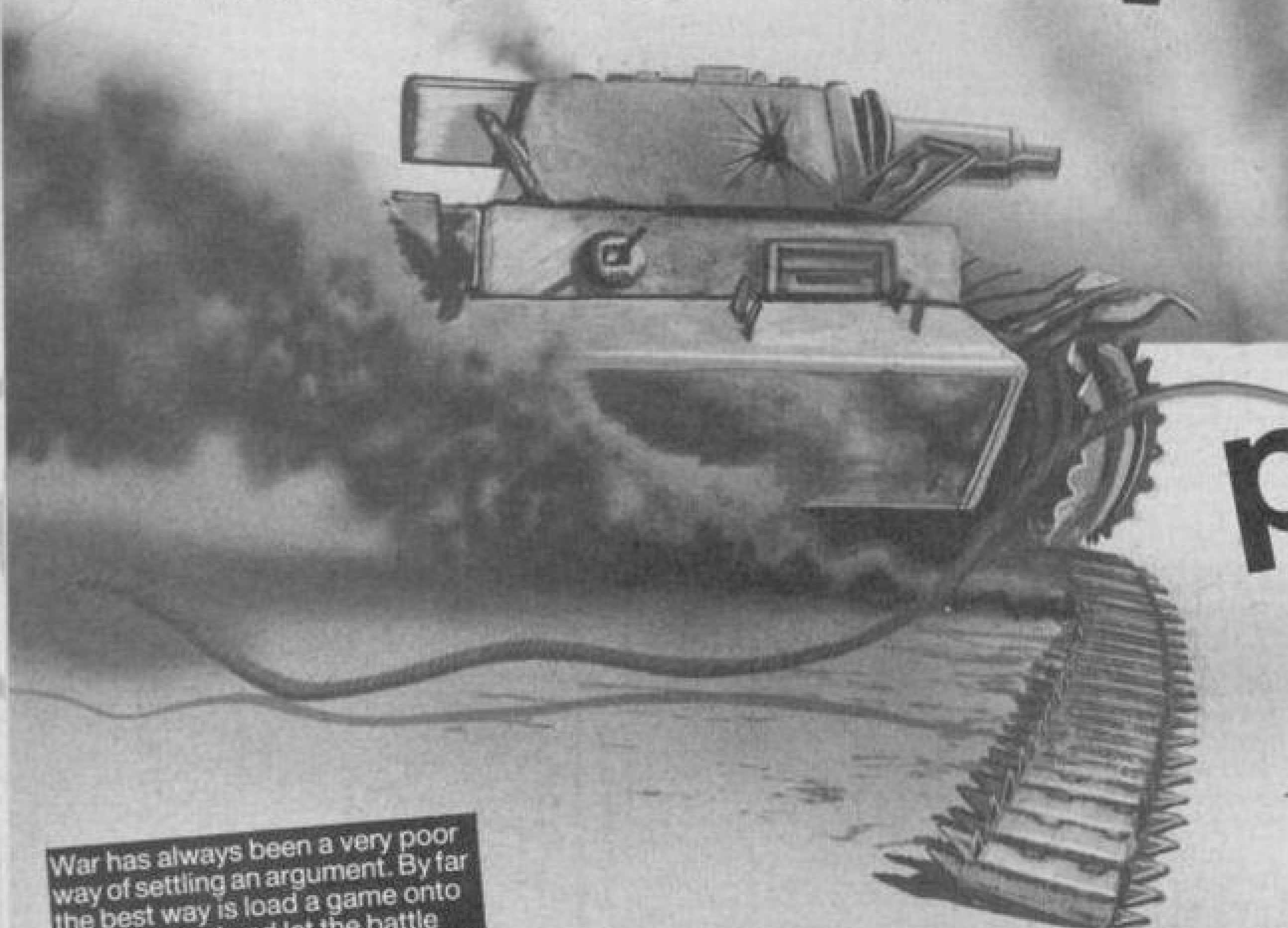


AMTIX! COMPETITION

War has always been a very poor way of settling an argument. By far the best way is load a game onto your Amstrad and let the battle commence — the winner can have their own way and nobody ends up with any nasty injuries.

The people at **CSS** tend to think along the same lines and so they've brought out *Desert Rats* so you can relive the strategy of those hard years the Desert Rats had during the Second World War. They actually did very well even though they were fighting against all odds. I wonder if they'd have done as well if they'd been stuck within the dusty confines of Chateau AMTIX! having to fight off the battalions from Mail Order lead by the Jiffy Bag Aunt Aggie who barks orders at this poor competition minion with the acid tongue of a Sergeant Major. The daily duty roster issued by Field Marshall Malcolm sends his writing minions diving for the cover of the nearest fox hole and the Council of Wars that are convened in the Art Garret continually ordering me to make more tea (not too sweet) as they plot and plan the next issue of the magazine.

All of this goes on whilst I nestle in the relative safety of my broom cupboard bunker trying to remain uncaptured by the overwhelming enemy forces and forced to hard labour — lugging yet more mail sacks and climbing the three flights to the Art garret to make even more tea. Yes, war's not easy on anyone but there are the odd moments when I'm excused fatigues and get to write a competiton so put your hard hats on and get thinking about this one.

All you have to do this time is to answer the questions printed on this page that are all about the Second World War. The questions aren't too easy unless you've done a lot of history at school so, if you havn't got an encyclopaedia in the house I sugvgest you rush to the local library and cheat! Now just pop the finished answers on to the back of a post card, including your address and telephone number and just wait to see if your name is printed in a future results page.

The winner will receive a supersonic personal stereo and a copy of the game *Desert Rats*. There's also a copy of the game for the 25 runners up. The questions are:-

1: Who wrote DESERT RATS?

2: Which British Armoured Division was known as THE DESERT RATS?
a) 1st
b) 7th
c) 10th

3: On the instructions of Winston Churchill, four British Divisions were transferred from Alexandria to where?

4: Which of the following battles were fought between the German and British forces?
a) Operation Crusader
b) Operation Compass
c) Beda Fomm
d) Battle of Knightsbridge
e) Battle of Gazala

5: In which city were the British garrisons besieged by Axis forces throughout the campaign?
a) Bardia
b) Tobruk
c) Gazala
d) Benghazi

6: How many mines were laid at El Alamein?
a) 100,000
b) 200,000
c) 400,000
d) 500,000

7: Which General was in command at El Alamein and in the Market Garden Operation (Arnhem)?

8: Which Panzer Divisions were involved in the Battle of Gazala?
a) 8th
b) 10th
c) 15th
d) 21st

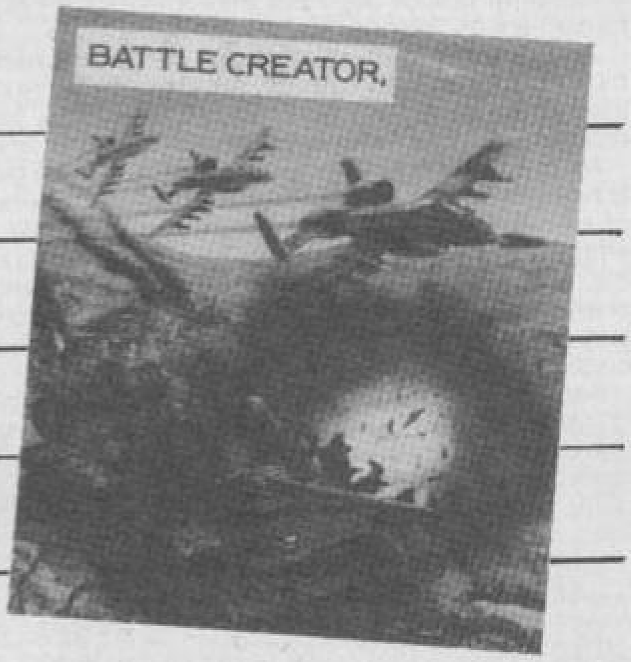
9: Which British Corps was in the Battle of El Alamein and formed part of the Garden Forces at Arnhem?
a) XIII Corps
b) XX Corps
c) XXX Corps

10: What was the name of the German Field Marshall at El Alamein?

Simple aren't they? Just write down what you think are the correct answers and send them to Desert Fox Competition, P O Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 IDB, to arrive by 15th September.

STRATEGY

THE WAKE OF A NEW AGE?



You may remember as far back as two months ago, when I reviewed *Battlefield Germany*, I expressed the fear that the game would not achieve massive sales because of the limitations of small companies when it comes to marketing. However, it transpires that Robert McMahon of Cybercom and Gary Mays of PSS have made a deal where the game will be re-released under the PSS banner in November — across the full range of home micros. Not only does this mean the game will get the recognition it deserves, but the author will have more chances to show his skills in new products. Plans are already in the pipeline for another game. Congratulations and good luck to both parties.

Though the *Battle Creator* from Argus Press Software has not yet arrived, it could be the best thing to happen to strategy games in years. If this utility does its job well, it could do for the strategy games market what *The Quill* has done for adventure games. New authors with fresh ideas will begin to emerge. As new talent is applied to the hobby, more people will find what they're looking for in original strategy games. This product is something to look out for.

BATTLEFRONT

Central Solutions, £0.95 cassette

Let's make this one short and sweet shall we? It's one thing to have games thrown onto the market at the attractive price of 95p but quite another when they're a load of rubbish. This game, one of a budget series by **Central Solutions** is a straightforward scenario between two anonymous forces, equally matched in terms of both weapons and numbers across a battlefield one screen across.

The game may be played solitaire or against the computer. Either way, the first action is to deploy your forces. Later, you may wish to modify forces or re-draw the map. Both of these options are provided but they are unlikely to be required initially. Soldiers, tanks, scouts, transport and fighter planes and a couple of engineering units thrown in for good measure.

Throw them across the map and start moving them. The chunky graphics make the playing area seem very cramped — well, it is. Combat is automatic and provides the occasional three voice thunder effect. Er, while you're waiting for the combat to be carried out, you have the option of staring at a fly on the wall.

The game poses one poignant question. Why? Why did the programmer bother? Why did **Central Solutions** bother? And why am I wasting space over this insulting farce? Not the cheapest way of buying a blank tape.

Presentation 67%
Graphics 20%
Complexity 11%
Authenticity 10%
Lastability 12%
Value for money 11%
Overall 10%

FORMULATING FIREPOWER (Part II)

Last month, I discussed the importance of priority and balance in wargames. The arguments are carried a stage further below and consider how contrast can add to the variety of considerations facing the player . . .

When you're painting, how do you make a black ball look *really* black? Paint a white spot on it. That's a basic requirement of art. To make something stand out, contrast it. It's a good maxim for strategy games as well. Last month, contrast was used as a vehicle for creating an apparent imbalance in a hypothetical conflict, free to be exploited by whichever side discovers the other's weaknesses first. This month, contrast will be used to heighten more details in a simulation.

For most wargames, terrain is an important feature. It is of course, in no way realistic to have tanks moving at the same speed when on roads or going cross country. It would not be realistic in a number of cases to have them crossing rivers either. But terrain can be used to present the

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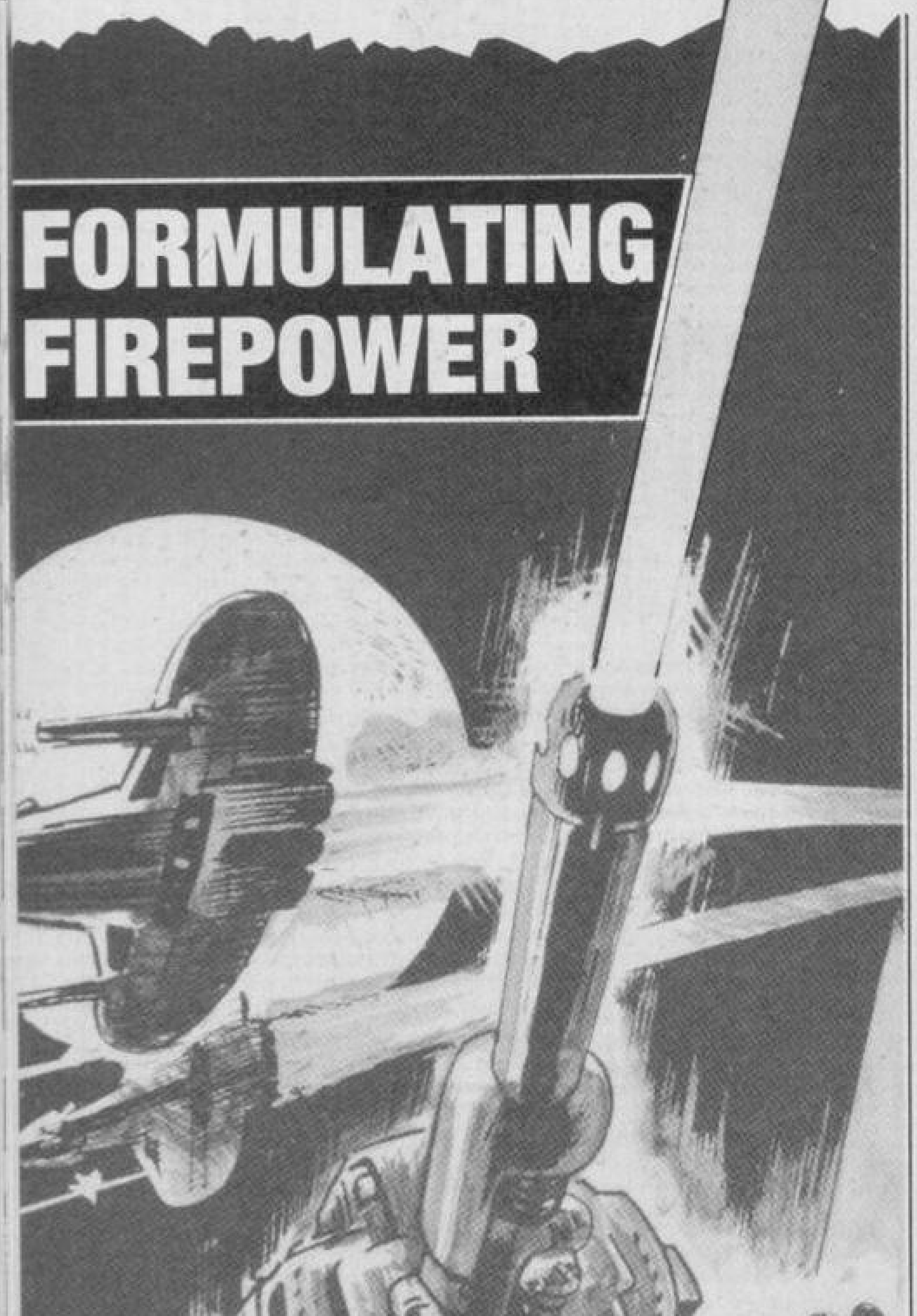
FORMULATING FIREPOWER



player with a variety of paradoxes to put his mind to the test.

The amount by which terrain restricts the movement of unit must be related to the scale, unit size and game objective. Not only can the consequences of different types of terrain be used to shape the game but so, of course, can the positioning of the terrain features. Castles are never built in valleys. Then the different types of unit can be considered. Putting in unit types especially to cope with certain terrain features gives a player something to consider even if at the outcome, they are not needed. On the other hand, the whole game may revolve around the concept of proper use for a particular feature of your force within any movement or defence advantage.

And now I'm getting ahead of myself. Terrain does not just affect movement. It affects combat. As a target, you're harder to hit in a forest than you are on the open plains. However, a better assault could be organised across flat country than within a constricted environment.

Morale is another feature where contrast can give options to a player. Is he better off having unlimited numbers of raw recruits or a small force of elite combatants? How in turn is the morale of those combatants affected by their circumstances? If ammunition is low and the strength of the enemy forboding, then the average squaddie cannot fancy his chances too highly. To go back to terrain, troops with the advantage of surprise through terrain (or just good planning) should be more alert and confident.

Fatigue is often ignored as a feature of wargaming. I honestly cannot understand why this is so, as its importance certainly ranks along side that of any other variable factor. The longer troops have been in the field, the worse they will fight. The only factor that will temper this is the quality of the troops themselves. It is however, an inevitable occurence. Equipment can lessen fâtigue as can terrain. It's easy to march over a plain than a swamp but then it's easier still to drive. A rocket launcher is more powerful than a rifle but requires more effort to transport. Again, the player will have to worry about how hard to push his troops and how to temper caution.

Scale is another important aspect to consider. Obviously, a game where entire armies fight against each other, the scale of the map will be several miles across. But at different scales, different criteria become important. On a strategic level, the chain of command reduces the content of orders to the minimum of complexity. On the tactical level, the abilities of individuals will play a greater part.

Unfortunately consideration of all these points will not guarantee a good strategy game. For they are over specified, tied to a small range of scenarios. You cannot measure morale or fatigue in a game like chess. These are merely examples of variables and, in abstract games, it must be for the designer to decide how these variables affect each other and how many of them to use. This may appear to be easier. There are fewer apparent rules to follow. But just as apparently simplistic games are often the most difficult to master, the balancing of abstract variables can be tiringly difficult.

For this reason, the easiest ideas to handle at first will be applied ones, such as the military simulation. Historical ones are best because, by and large, all the major factors involved are known. Contemporary and science fiction based games are nearer to the fully abstract level of difficulty. This is because you are free to make assumptions about vague areas of effect. You don't want to bite off more than you can chew.

Going a stage further, it's easier to produce a utility for a conventional wargame as a first step. This way, you concentrate solely on the algorithms necessary to fit the rules onto your micro and are not distracted by such aesthetic factors as screen display. The algorithms are the most important part of the game. Unlike the arcade genre, the best features of any wargame are the ones you cannot see. Consequently, it is harder both to write and analyse such games. Interestingly, conventional wargame magazines (not that there are many, nowadays) have occasionally run interviews with computer wargame designers. These can often serve as a very good guideline for the prospective game designer.

It's possible to bear all these considerations in mind when programming an Amstrad. How much you make each factor interdependent with another will affect the available scope and make playing more difficult. A disk based game would be the only kind capable of being multi-dimensional in terms of both depth and scope. Nothing of this type has yet appeared on the Amstrad. This means the machine has a long way to go in this area before it has reached its full potential. First someone has to start programming these games and then they have to become good! Considering the complications involved, the speed of development in this field has been unsurprisingly slow.

This essay was not so much an attempt at a crash course in strategy game design but served simply to illustrate the inherent complications in the creation of such games even before the programming stage is reached. Until now, these games have been low in popularity, but more and more elements of strategy gaming are being adopted for use in arcade and adventure games in an attempt to bring something new to the public. As a result more hybrid games are emerging and becoming popular. It may be that the crossover between various types of games increases to such a level that games become impossible to 'pigeonhole'. Until that day, let's hope for more fruitful development of this fascinating aspect of computer gaming.

Sean Masterson

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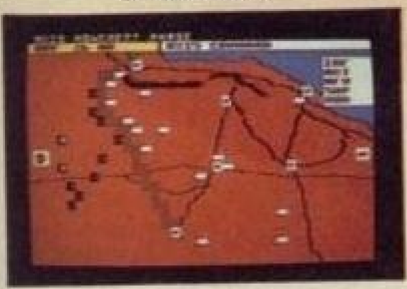
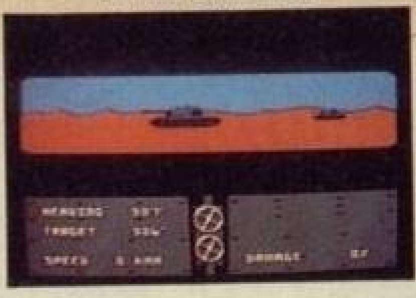
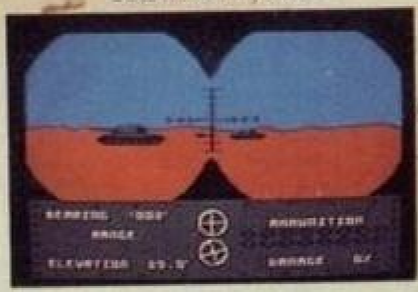
MAIN MAP



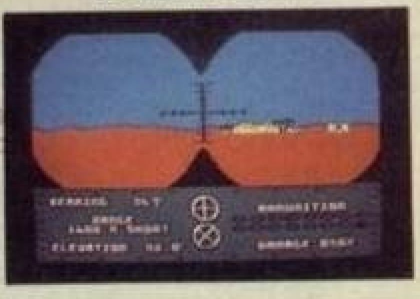
TANK DRIVING



TANK ATTACK



TOWN ATTACK



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AMTIX! COMPETITION

WIN AN ALL EXPENSES PAID WEEK-END TRIP TO LONDON COURTESY OF DOMARK

Trivial Pursuit is the name of a great new game from **Domark** that runs along the same lines as Britain's number one board game. Unfortunately, *Trivial Pursuit* also sums up this minion's life. I run round all day organising these fabberoony comps, making the tea, fetching the food for the bottomless stomaches of the joystick junkies, oiling Malcolm's Bathchair, cleaning Saffron's brolly and to top the lot I even have to clean out my very own broom cupboard! The shame of it all. However, minion's life is on the upturn, yes loyal minion watchers, your favourite minion has been given a *Trivial Pursuit* game. I now rush home every evening and eagerly engage in a quick bash of stimulating general knowledge with the cat; Ok so I haven't won yet, but I'm practising.

Obviously the chaps down at **Domark** have also been getting into this game, they like it so much they've got that nice bunch from **ODE** to write the OFFICIAL computer version of it. Not only does it include the normal questions but also makes use of the sound and graphics facilities on our beloved machines to engage our minds into even more, and as far as this Minion can see it's all jolly fun.

So why is Minion telling you all this, well **Domark** have sent us some marvellous prizes to give away, namely.

First Prize: an all expenses paid trip to London for the final of the *TRIVIAL PURSUIT* telly game AND a chance to win the £10,000 Golden Game Competition AND a TP Genius II board game.

Four Second Prizes: *TRIVIAL PURSUIT* Genius II board games.

Ten Runners Up Prizes: Boxes of *TRIVIAL PURSUIT* chocolates, absolutely scrummy - but very fattening.

All you have to do is to answer the following AMTIX! Trivia questions, the first one out of the Crumbly one's bathchair boot wins one of those amaaaazzzing prizes.

1: Where is the Competition Minion's favourite haunt?

2: In what year was Malcolm's Bathchair constructed?

3: What is the make of Lloyd Mangram's typewriter which Saffron also uses to answer the letters?

4: What is the name of The Terminal Man's female companion?

5: What is the name of the local pub that the AMTIX! staff use occasionally? Is it:-
a) The Cow and Ruptured Spleen.
b) The Pig and Ball Bearings.
c) The Dog and Lamp Post.

AND THERE'S MORE YET . . .

Now, as your ever faithful minion, I promise all these facts can quite easily be found in various issues of AMTIX!, most of them in this issue, unfortunately it's not going to be just that easy. No, because of the quality of the prizes, we're also going to ask you to make up a *TRIVIAL PURSUIT* type question which will work as a tie breaker, the most interesting one winning. For example:
How far would The QE II travel on ONE gallon of fuel.
ANSWER: Six Inches.

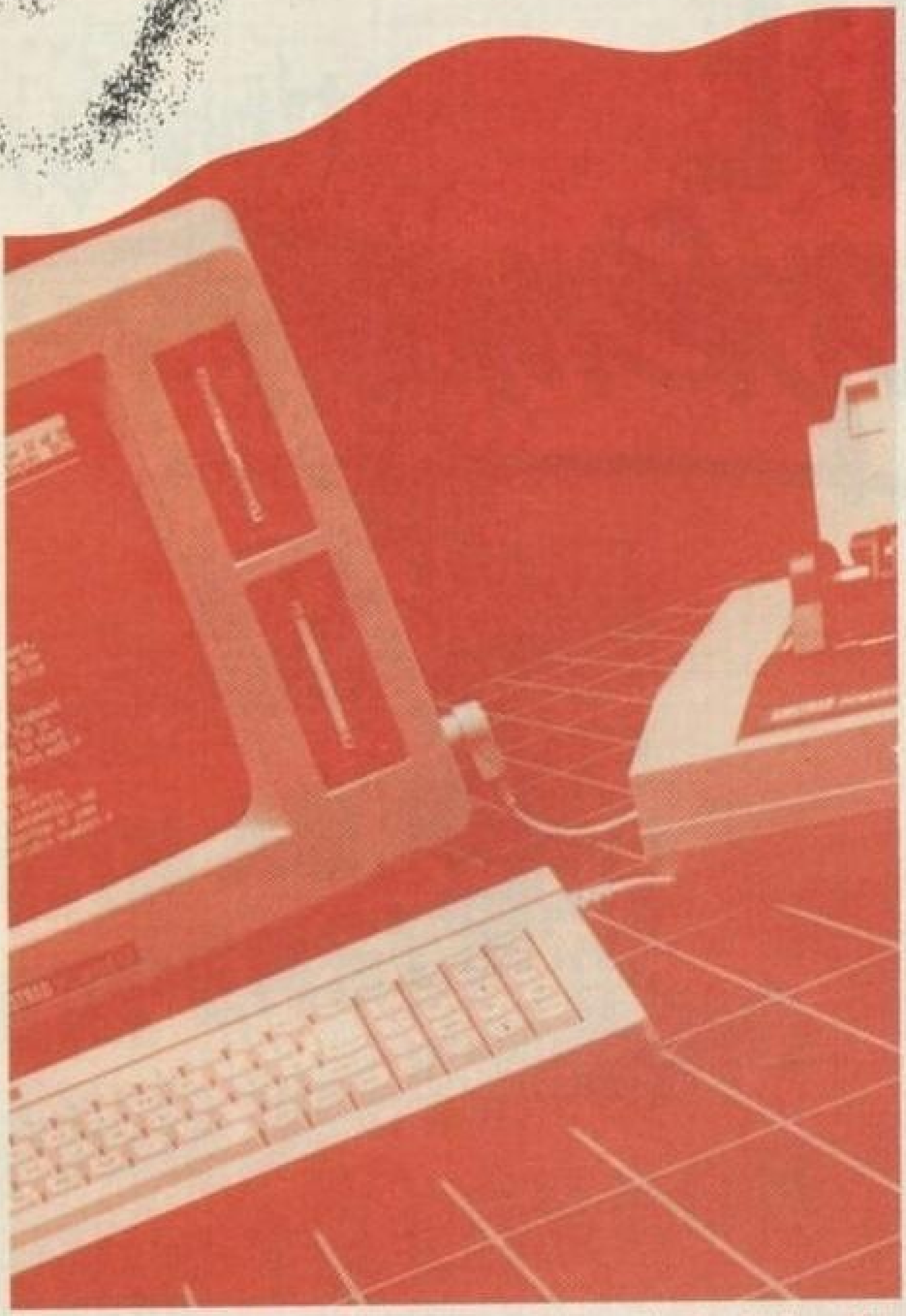
So add your own interesting trivia question in case you tie for the fabulous first prize and send you answers on a postcard to:

MINION'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE,
AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow,
Shropshire. SY8 1DB.

Get all your wonderful entries in by September 15th else there'll be nothing coming through your letter box.

JOYCE Supplement

- BATTLE OF THE CHESS GIANTS!
  A comparison of two of the top chess games — Cyrus 11 and Colossus 4
- GAMES REVIEWS
- TAKING A GRAPHIC TABLET
  A review of the latest gem from Grafsales
- SPOTLIGHT ON A PROGRAMMER
  A profile on Batman programmer, Jon Ritman
- WIN A COPY OF BATMAN
- TYPING TUTORS
- WORKING YOUR JOYCE!
  Practical advice on the use of the PCW8256
- MORE BOOKS FOR YOUR PERUSAL



For some months now it has become increasingly obvious the market for PCW8256 and PCW8512 machines has been steadily growing in importance in Britain. In fact at the last count there was reckoned to be over 750,000 private owners of the Joyce and Fat Joyce. While AMTIX! is predominently a magazine for software games we recognise that many of our readers do own the aforementioned machine. We felt some of you proud Joyce owners might feel a bit left out and so in a burst of inspiration we decided a supplement on Joyce might be in order. With your support it may even become a regular feature, why not write in and give us your views?

Just because the Joyce is a business machine doesn't mean that it can't be fun, take a look at the veritable flow of games that are now appearing on your dear PCW!

In the supplement we have a look at the latest chess programs, a quick bit of Super hero work from the omnipresent, and ever youthful Bruce Wayne, some 3D fantasy as Isvar gets to grips with a very large castle, and even a quick skirmish between three burly typing tutors, what more could one want?

For those of you with a more serious side we have a quick look at Grafsale's new *GRAFPAD* and an audio teaching aid with which you are guaranteed to become an expert Joyce owner.

Hear all about the troubles and strife of the *Batman* programmer himself, and get a dust cover for your little gem for under a tenner in our exclusive reader offer.

It all adds up to a mega supplement — in fact pure Joyce genius! Happy reading!

MALCOLM HARDING

BATTLE OF TH

Taking a long hard look at the virtues of both CYRUS 11 and COLOSSUS 4

With all the games that are coming out for the 8256/8512 it was inevitable that chess would appear at some time, and luckily, the first two on the market are two of the best. Though through different companies, both *Cyrus II* and *Colossus 4* were released almost simultaneously and seem to have gained considerably during the conversion. Graphically *Cyrus II* is way ahead of *Colossus 4*, the 3D graphics being very well defined, moving smoothly about the screen, increasing and decreasing in size as they shift towards and away from you.

Both performed well on all levels with the difficulty of play increasing at a steady rate. *Cyrus II* also gave the capability to play an adaptable game, ie, the computer would change the level of difficulty depending on how well you were playing but always attempts to play slightly better so that your game would improve with practice. On both programs, if you're really getting beaten hollow then changing sides is the best move. Both allow you to set the board up to solve problems etc. There is also the option to set an *all-the-moves* game where if a player was to exceed a specified time, say five minutes, on his own moves before the end of the game then he loses by default.

In problem mode you must specify the type of problem required, ie. mates of the form, Black mates White in X moves, self mates where the machine tries to lose the game to the opposing side having first selected the side that the program is taking, and finally set a problem of the form White moves to help Black to mate White in X moves. Both machines tell you if they think a mate is about to be made in the near future, and at this point the program will ask you to concede or will itself concede if it thinks it is about to lose. Answering no to this question usually results in a quick end.

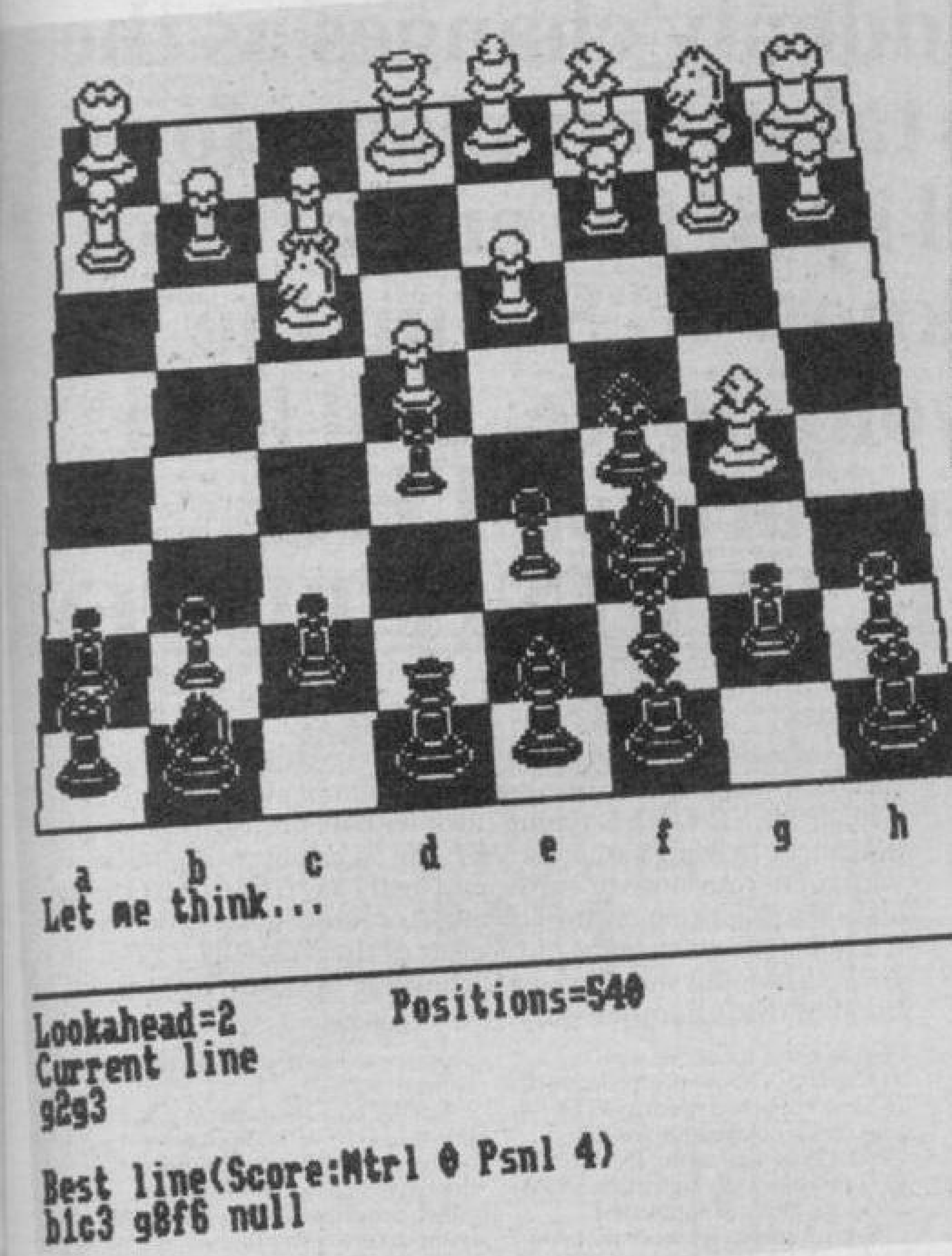
The best way to compare chess programs is by a table, so here's one that should be fairly comprehensive.

Scores out of ten or Y/N answer

	CYRUS II	COLOSSUS 4
2D graphics	9	
3D graphics	10	5
50 move rule	Y	Y
Levels	9	6 but like modes
Back step	Y	Y
Set up	Y	Y
Printer dump	Y	Y
Cursor ctrl	Y	Y
Algebraic ctrl	N	Y
Hint	Y	Y
Force move	Y	Y
Self play	Y	Y
Supervisior	N	Y
3 pos rule	Y	Y
Replay	N	Y
Check for stalemate	N	Y
En passent	Y	Y
Promotion value select	Y	Y
Next best move	Y	Y
Opening book	1900	about 3000
Checks per sec	N/A	170 ave
Save game	Y	Y
Predefined problems and set games	none	18 and 34

Amsoft
GOLD
CYRUS II CHESS

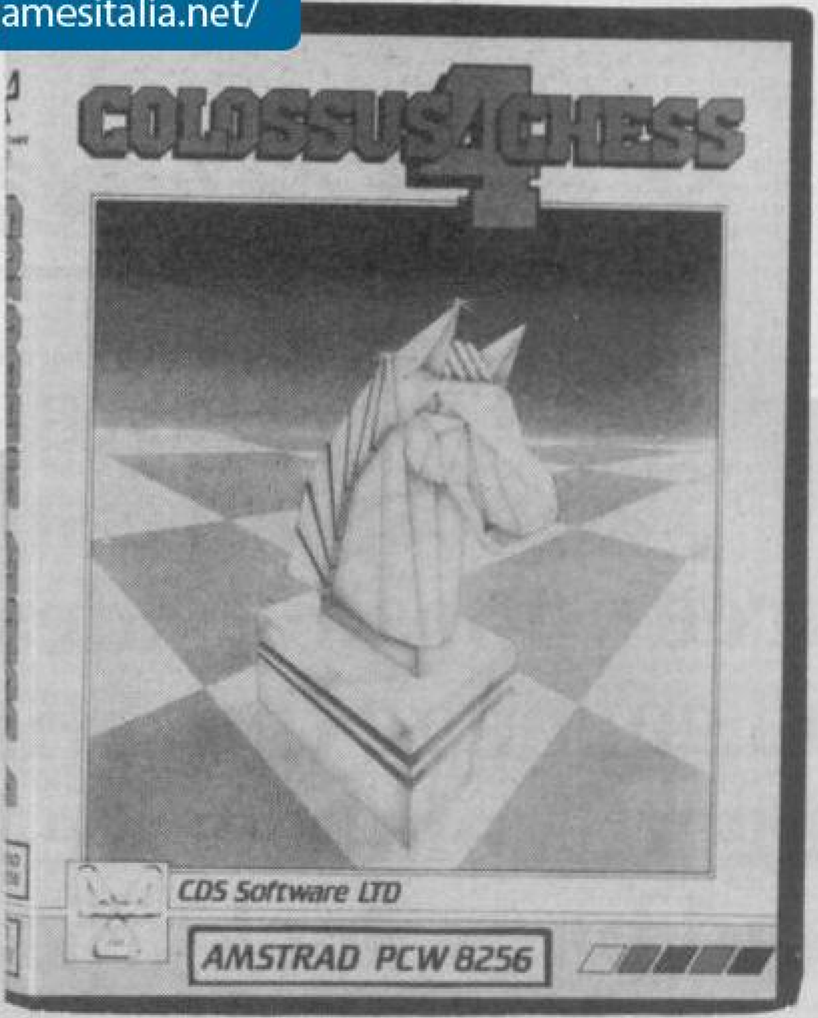
CHESS GIANTS

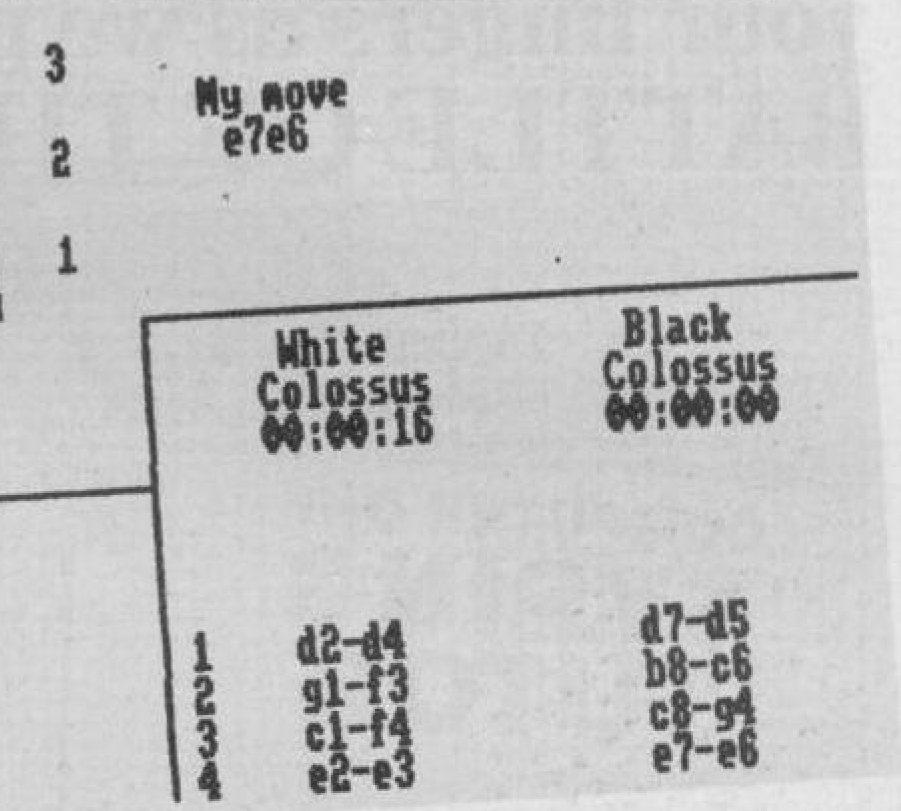


```
Let me think...

Lookahead=2          Positions=540
Current line
g2g3

Best line(Score:Mtrl 0 Psnl 4)
b1c3 g8f6 null
```

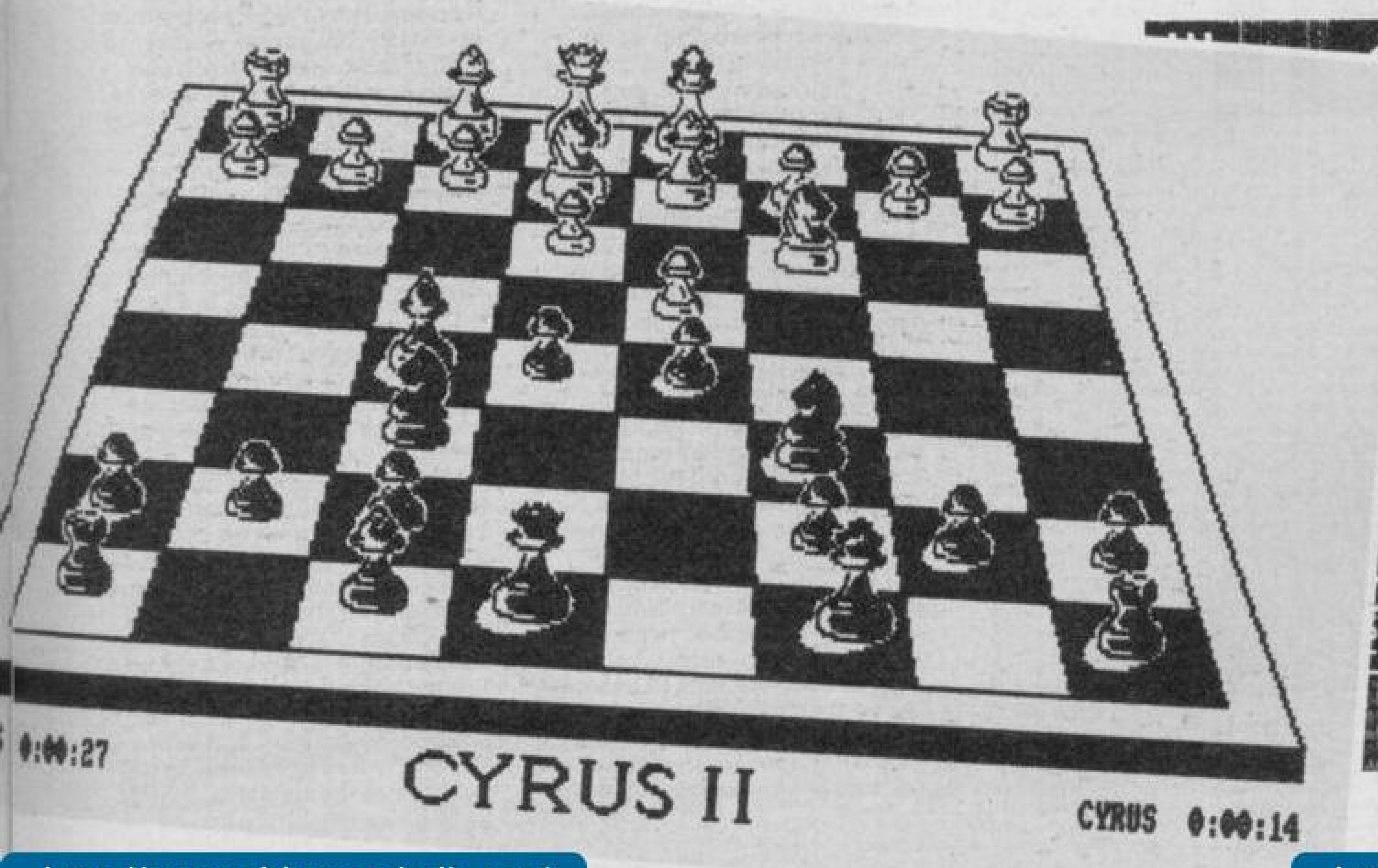

COLOSSUS 4 CHESS
CDS Software LTD
AMSTRAD PCW 8256



```
My move
 e7e6

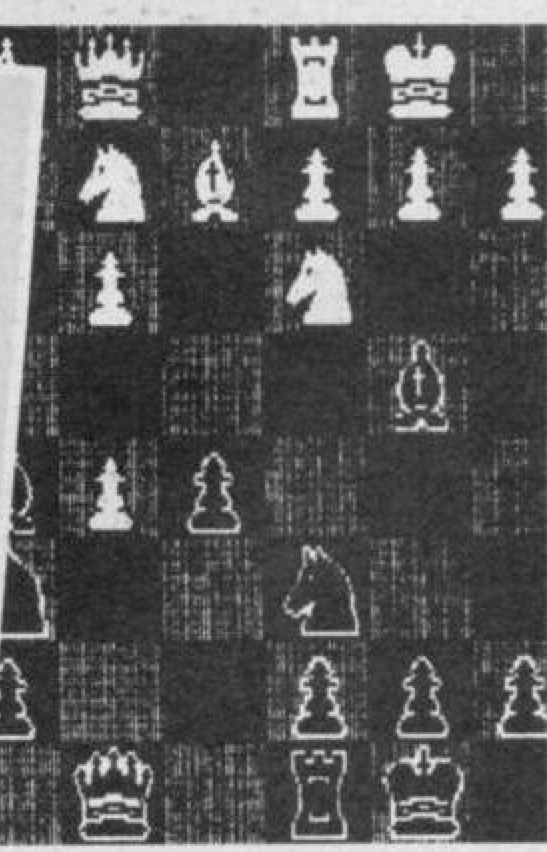
     White          Black
    Colossus       Colossus
    00:00:16       00:00:00

1    d2-d4          d7-d5
2    g1-f3          b8-c6
3    c1-f4          c8-g4
4    e2-e3          e7-e6
```

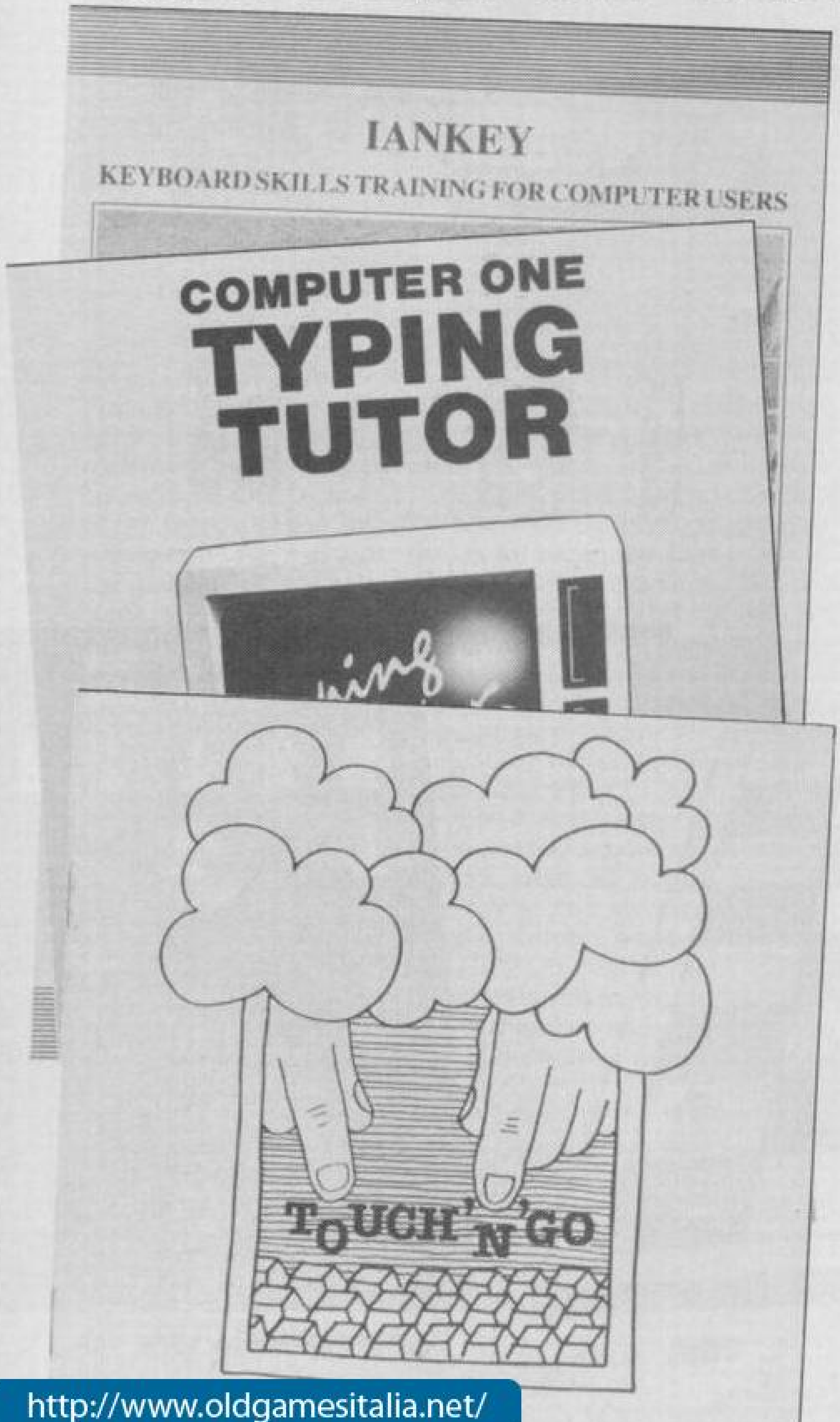


```
0:00:27                    CYRUS  0:00:14
```

CYRUS II



As day dawns on a typical Friday the atmosphere suddenly changes as the three opposing sides take their places for the carnage that will spell the end of two finger typing as we know it. Set up the sand bags, lock up your Joyce, and load your fingers as we prepare for THE BATTLE OF THE TYPING TUTO


IANKEY
KEYBOARD SKILLS TRAINING FOR COMPUTER USERS
COMPUTER ONE
TYPING
TUTOR
TOUCH'N'GO

In its unassuming small blue package comes the first of three programs which are to bring so much calamity to reviewers, *COMPUTER ONE*'S typing tutor with its pretty graphics and finger twisting game, *IANKEY* in its bright yellow pack with numerous how-to-cards, and lastly *TOUCH'N'GO*, all in black with a picture of the hand of 'God' coming down from the clouds to learn the secrets of the *TOUCH TYPERS*,(a hideous number of which reside upstairs in reception but that's another story!)

First to enter the scene was *TOUCH'N'GO*, with a promise of 24 hour keyboard mastery. The program is compatible for the CPC6128 as well as the PCW8256/8512 machines, though other CP/M using systems are supported.

The programs assumes that you have no keyboard experience, giving you a quick intro in the use of home keys as a building block towards keyboard skills — the home keys being those which you place your fingers over, and return your fingers to, after typing some other letter. Starting with the left hand, the program first gives you practice of using the A,S,D,F keys, with simple tests involving typing 20 F's with spaces between each one. Spaces should be typed with right hand thumb (ever played Defender?). The accuracy and typing speed is selectable, but for these very simple tests the accuracy should be set to 100% and the typing speed at about 30 WPM (words per minute). As you progress the tests get harder until the last one has you typing in well known phases by famous people (*CAXTONs* PR dept and the like).

This is all very well but even touch typists can learn from this one, yes, for those of you with keypad problems there is help. The program also features 13 lessons for those of you wishing to become familiar with the keypad for quick data entry (though I don't think the price of £24.95 justifies buying the program to learn just this skill alone).

Unlike both the other typing tutors, *TOUCH'N'GO* does not have a general representation of the keyboard layout on screen, which could lead to very bad habits in the future. For example, if you are really stuck on where a certain key is situated you should look at screen and try to judge the position of said key, but instead you have to look at the keyboard which may result in you having to look at the keyboard more often, just through habit, which will impede your eventual typing speed and also your accuracy when copy typing.

The seven page manual is merely a getting started instruction book which contains no helpful hints but instead tries to explain, in a user friendly way, how to set up working disks to save your progress reports on, and also how to copy the program as you should never use your master disk to save files on or as a general boot up disk.

The same program is used for both the CPC6128 and the PCW8256. The package never has a line of more than 80 characters so SET24X80 is never needed. There can, however, be a problem with the drive used for saving the progress files onto. Drives A or B are fine but if you use drive M, as is possible on the PCW8256, then the program returns to CP/M with a BDOS error. The lessons are still the same as the system uses CP/M

PLUS allowing you to use the same TPA of 112k just like the PCW8256, but no M drive.

THE MERITS OF IANKEY

Weighing in next comes *IANKEY* from **IANSYST** (bet you can't name the designer). In its bright yellow box it is certainly out to catch the eye, but what put it above many others, to me, is the inclusion of a help card and some stickers to cover the legends on the keyboard, (which ended up on someone else's keyboard). This meant that if you tried to look at the keyboard all you would see are some garish coloured keys, though if you are really stuck you can look at the crude but adequate representation of the keyboard at the bottom of the screen.

As you go through the instructions it is possible to use the the time to familiarise yourself with the keyboard by typing while the machine is waiting for RETURN to be pressed.

Instead of the more usual lines of nonsense that you would usually type in the lessons, *IANKEY* tries to give you fairly interesting sentences using the letters that you have already learned, this makes for a much quicker understanding of the keyboard. If you were to type just the same thing over and over then you learn the order in which to type, but with *IANKEY* you must think what you are doing, an altogether much better way to learn.

When entering a sentence all the errors are pointed out to you in a clear way by putting an identifier under the mistake, ie **c** means a capital letter was wrong, **q** shows you missed out a character, **x** means you typed the wrong character, **i** shows that you inserted a character and finally -- means that the two characters underlined are the wrong way around (known as typing stutter).

Speed and accuracy are important but their importance depends on your specific needs. If you're learning to be a secretary you would have to be more accurate than if you were just going to write letters to your friends. If you feel, although you failed a test, that you wish to carry on then their is nothing stopping you from taking the next test, though this is not recommended.

The program does more than just teach you to type as it also gives notes on seating posture as well as how to position your keyboard for the best possible personal performance.

Anyone who wishes to use *IANKEY* in a classroom situation will be glad to know that if you contact **IANSYST** they will be more than willing to amend your licence. Even if you only wish to use the tutor yourself it would be a good idea to fill in the registration card as it will allow you to get software updates as they appear. If there are any computer users who wish to brush up on their typing skills then *IANSYST* also stock products to help you in this area.

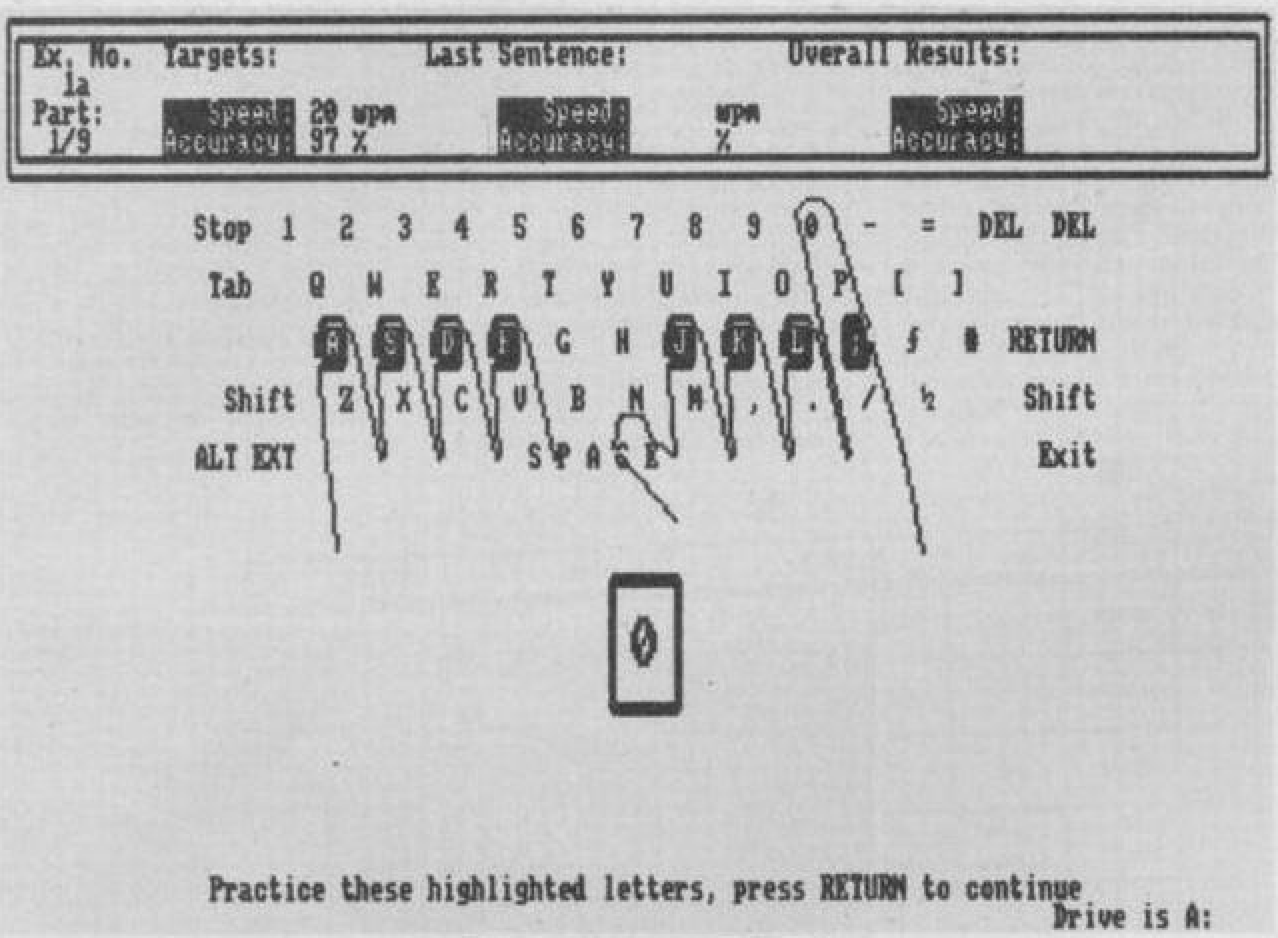
HIGHLY POLISHED

Last onto the scene comes **COMPUTER ONE'S** simply named *TYPING TUTOR*, which appears to be the most highly polished tutor on the market. The first thing that strikes you about this tutor is the manual, which is a real joy to use, giving detailed instruction on typing posture as well as the usual start up information. As well as the usual on screen instructions you are also given notes within the manual on each of the lessons, which should prepare you for each stage. It also allows you to select the required lesson if you have forgotten where you had got up to.

Once the program is running you may select the required lesson and it is then that you realise the work that has gone into the program as you are confronted by a very well set out representation of the keyboard and directions on where your fingers should be placed. As you type, the 'fingers' on the keyboard move depending on which key you have pressed, so showing you if you have used the correct finger for that particular letter. The lessons are much the same as those in *IANKEY* with increasing difficulty as you progress, but unlike *IANKEY* you start to use both hands straight away, starting with the home keys and then slowly moving outwards from those. As with all the others, accuracy and speed are selectable, as is the ability to save your progress to disk or the printer as a running evaluation.

Ok, you may say, typing tutors are not generally fun, although this one tries to break the normal mold by using graphics. **COMPUTER ONE** have come to the rescue with their version of *HANGMAN*. Unlike the normal game where you try to guess a word this one has you typing a line as it is revealed to you on screen, if you type faster than the speed that it is printed and pass the 'WINNING POST' then a piece of the man or the gallows in removed, but if you make too many mistakes or you type too slowly so that your input cursor is forced across the 'lose' post then the man is brought closer to a ropey fate. The man is not of the usual stick type but is presented as a well defined animated sprite-like character making the game very addictive. The sentences themselves are also very good and range from **'Friends, Romans, Countrymen . . .'** to **Beam me up Scotty . .**

This has got to be the best of the three, the others should be in shell shock, but then again all three are very good and should teach you very quickly, 24 hours is the average time to reach about 40 WPM, but for my money it has to be **COMPUTER ONE'S** *TYPING TUTOR*.



Ex. No. 1a Part: 1/9

Targets: Speed: 20 wpm Accuracy: 97 %

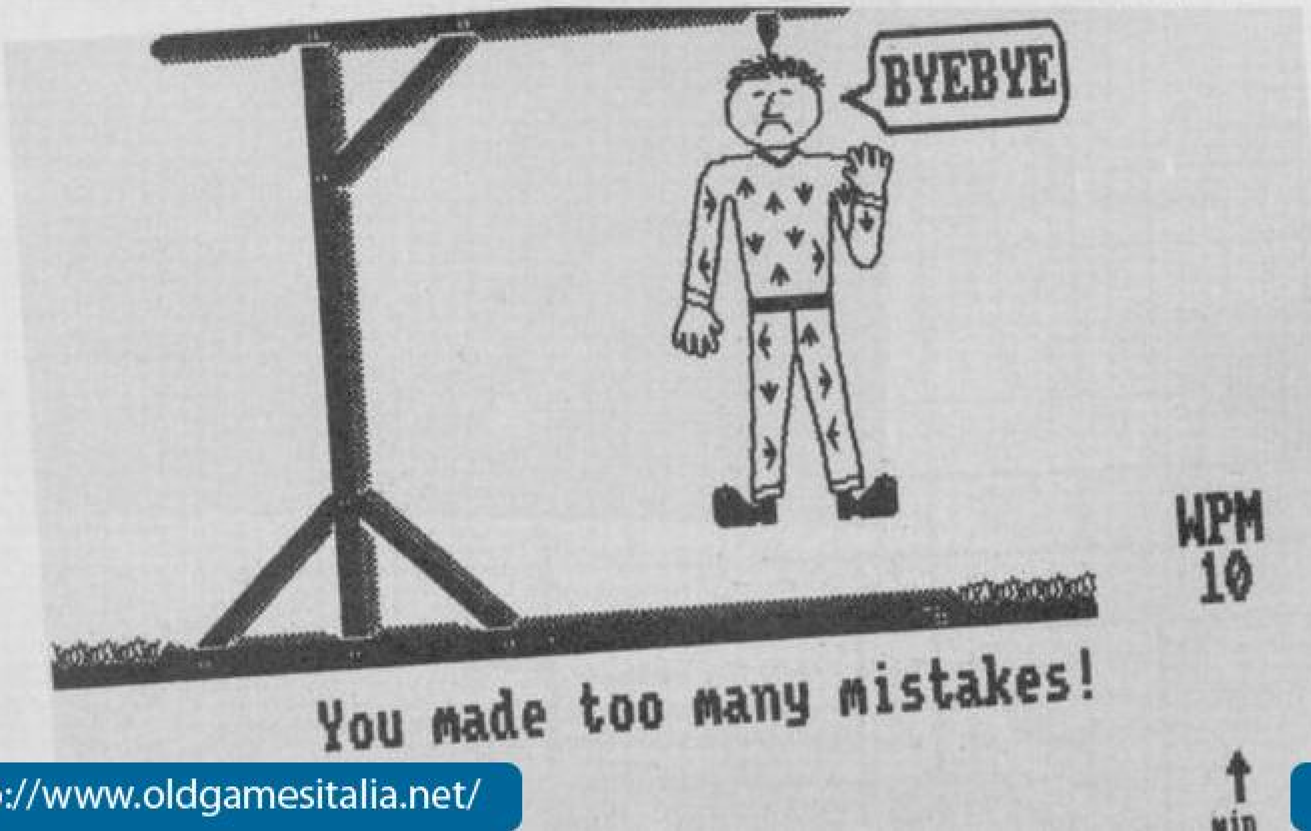
Last Sentence: Speed: wpm Accuracy: %

Overall Results: Speed: Accuracy:

Stop 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 - = DEL DEL
Tab Q W E R T Y U I O P [ ]
A S D F G H J K L ; # RETURN
Shift Z X C V B N M , . / ½ Shift
ALT EXT SPACE Exit
0

Practice these highlighted letters, press RETURN to continue

Drive is A:



You made too many mistakes!

ENTERING THE GRAFSALES WORLD OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Our technical editor, Anthony Clarke, travels south to take a look at a graphic tablet

It seems that Malcolm gets all the luck with British Rail, while all I get is stuck in the station for 3 hours due to points failure, but thankfully the trip was well worth the trouble.

Grafsales, as the name sugests, are products of graphic CAD/CAM packages but their main product is the revolutionary *Graphic Tablet*. This little gem is an A4 sized tablet that looks like many others, but at around £150 for a system that would usually cost around £2000, the difference starts to become obvious. Instead of the usual magnetic technology that most other similar systems use, this one uses digital technology allowing the entire decoding hardware to be placed on one chip, making the system both cheap, without loss of quality, and easy to manufacture on a production line system. At the moment **Grafsales** are converting their manufacturing system from batch to line production, which accounts for the poor availability of the system, but I am assured that production should be in full swing later this month.

The graphics program is a little gem, with all the usual zoom and rotate commands, selectable using the touch tablet which has a sheet inserted behind a clear plastic cover making it possible to change the layout for different programs.

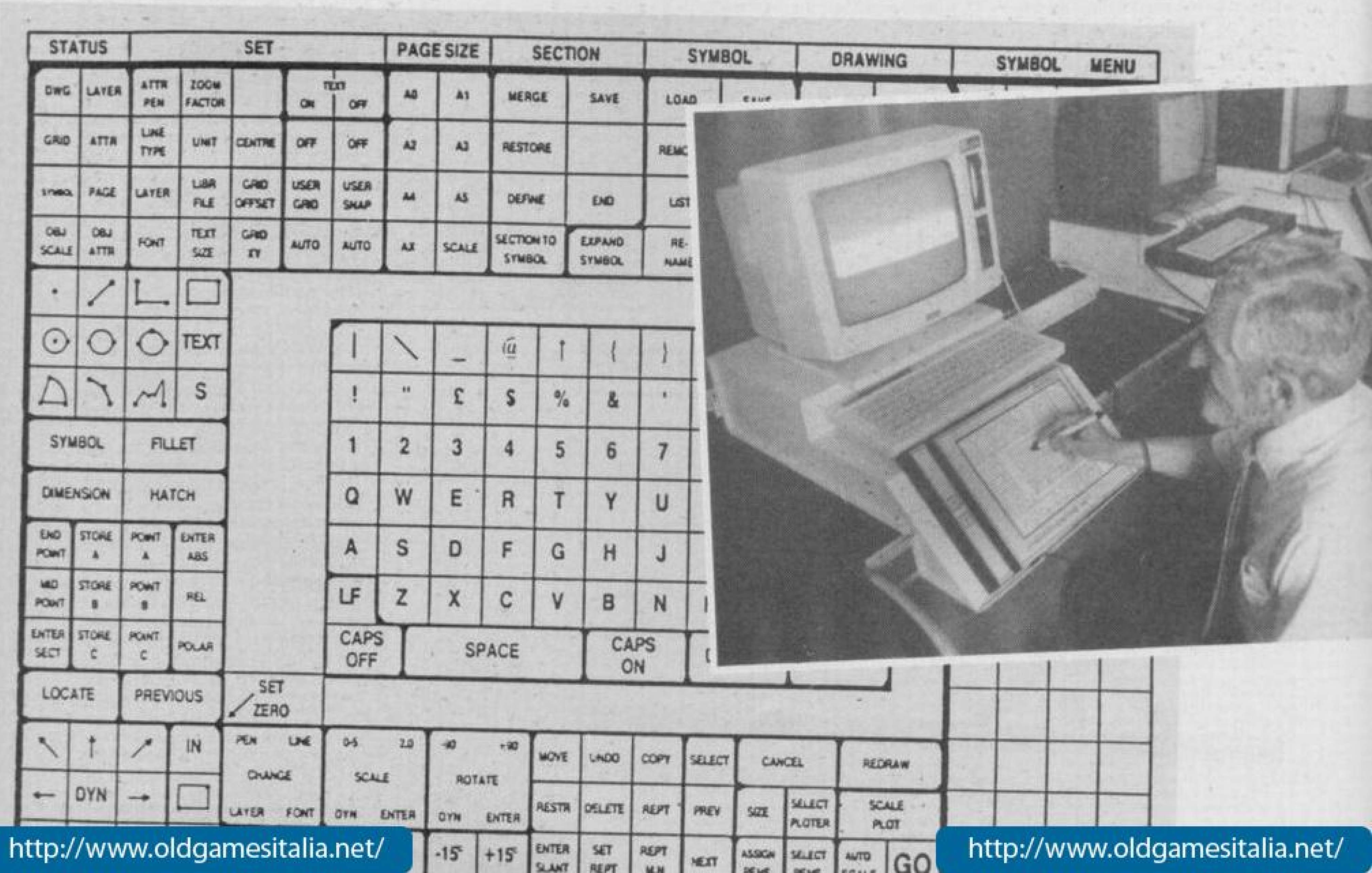
Once up and running I was shown some very good demos, the most impresive of which was that of a diagram of an office building. On the tables where typewriters and telephones etc, but on close examination of the typewriters we found type on the paper. Another had writing on a silicon chip that had to be enlarged 3 times before it could be read. All this makes for a very detailed display with an almost infinite ply of zooms.

THE PADFATHER

The original grafpad was invented by *Dr Mamigonian*, one of the few people in the world to have a Ph D in Robotics. He worked out a way of using the five degrees of freedom of a Robotic arm to give feedback and therefore work out the exact position of the arm. Well with this in mind he decided to work on 2 degrees of freedom, the x and y axis, and came up with the graphics tablet.

Graphsales have been around since September 1985 but their parent, British Micro, has been around a lot longer. Their graphic design packages have been available for just about every major home computer, and soon to come are versions for the Apricot, and IBM compatible machines. From humble beginings they now have distributors in 15 countries, from Iceland to Chile, and have manuals printed in 5 languages including Hebrew, as well as new manuals that are to be printed in several Indian languages, including Urdu. The PR person behind this is Gerald Roll, who personally speaks 5 languages, and has been with the company since 1956. This man has almost single handedly been responsible for the rise of **Grafsales**, by promoting their products anywhere he could.

What can **Grafsales** do now to top their already complete range which are available for all the Amstrad machines? Well, they are already working on an A3 sized version of their *Grafpad*, as well as some other software packages. When I questioned them further all that was said was, 'It's some time now since the new Rover 800 was announced, but it's only recently been unveiled and gone on sale to the public. We work in just the same way'.


STATUS
SET
PAGE SIZE
SECTION
SYMBOL
DRAWING
SYMBOL MENU
DWG
LAYER
ATTR PEN
ZOOM FACTOR
TEXT
ON
OFF
A0
A1
MERGE
SAVE
LOAD
GRID
ATTR
LINE TYPE
UNIT
CENTRE
OFF
OFF
A2
A3
RESTORE
PAGE
LAYER
LIBR FILE
GRID OFFSET
USER GRID
USER SNAP
A4
A5
DEFINE
END
LIST
OBJ SCALE
OBJ ATTR
FONT
TEXT SIZE
GRID XY
AUTO
AUTO
AX
SCALE
SECTION TO SYMBOL
EXPAND SYMBOL
TEXT
S
SYMBOL
FILLET
DIMENSION
HATCH
END POINT
STORE A
POINT A
ENTER ABS
MID POINT
STORE B
POINT B
REL
ENTER SECT
STORE C
POINT C
POLAR
1
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X
C
V
B
N
CAPS OFF
SPACE
CAPS ON
LOCATE
PREVIOUS
SET ZERO
IN
DYN
PEN
LINE
CHANGE
LAYER
FONT
SCALE
DYN
ENTER
ROTATE
DYN
ENTER
MOVE
UNDO
COPY
SELECT
CANCEL
REDRAW
RESTR
DELETE
REPT
PREV
SIZE
SELECT PLOTER
SCALE PLOT
-15°
+15°
ENTER SLANT
SET REPT
REPT W.H
NEXT
AUTO
GO

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BATMAN — THE INSID ACCORDING TO JON RITM

BATMAN was the first arcade game with graphics to run on the Joyce. The game began life on the Sinclair Spectrum and then moved onto the CPC range of Amstrad machines before arriving on the PCW — the first game for the Amstrad dedicated wordprocessor that had more than words: full on-screen graphics, faithful in every detail to other Batman versions except for colour. Veteran free-lance programmer JON RITMAN was behind the code which allowed OCEAN to scoop the other software houses in the race to get a graphics' game onto the PCW. GRAEME KIDD travelled down to Palmers Green and talked to Mr Ritman. . . .

Ace Programmer, Jon Ritman (29), sometimes wonders about the 'Ace Programmer' epithet that computer magazines have saddled him with. He's been writing games for nearly four years now, cutting his teeth on a ZX81 back in early 1982.

He was working as a TV engineer for Radio Rentals when he caught the computing bug. The company was doing market trials to investigate the potential of renting out home computers — the Atari for starters — and Jon figured that pretty soon there would be a need for specialist service engineers who could cope with computers. He bought a ZX81 to find out about these strange machines that were captivating everyone's imagination: 'After one week of staying up until 2am, eating my way through the manual, I went out and bought a 16K RAM pack and a book on machine code', Jon remembers. Shortly afterwards the first Ritman game came onto the market — *Namtir Raiders*, which arrived in June 1982. A promising programming career was in the making.

Then Jon upgraded to a Spectrum, and over the next seventeen months he wrote five games for **Artic**. His first Spectrum game, *Arg*, was never released, but *Cosmic Debris*, *3D Combat Zone*, *Dimension Destructors* and *Bear Bovver* established him as a respectable. Spectrum programmer.

At the start of 1984 Jon teamed up with Chris Clarke (the man who takes all responsibility for giving birth to **Design Design** — he started **Crystal Computing** which evolved into the strange Mancunian entity known colloquially as **Des Des** after he left to follow his own interests.) Jon and Chris met up during the marketing push for *Bear Bovver*, the last Ritman game published by **Artic**. Chris had left programming behind, and joined **Artic** on the business side, but the lure of dabbling at the bytes level drew him back to writing games rather than selling them.

The duo discussed the sort of games that ought to be written, looked at the Commodore football game, talked to distributors and soon realised that the Spectrum market was crying out for a good football game. Setting out on their own to write a footie game, they were a bit worried when **Artic** released *World Cup Football* one week after they started their project. Panic soon left them once they'd taken a look at the game, however, and work continued until November 1983 when the finished product was released by **Ocean**: the classic Spectrum game, *Match Day*.'

WELL IMPRESSED

Just after *Match Day* had been completed, Jon saw **Ultimate**'s *Knight Lore* and was well impressed. 'This is the sort of world I'd like to see a game in', he thought, 'it's just like playing a Disney cartoon'. He decided to have a go at writing a game that used a similar 3D view and involved a hero — *Batman*. A friend of Jon's, who lives just down the road in Palmers Green, draws for fun and Jon

CRACK THE WORDSQUARE AND WIN A COPY OF BATMAN

Fifty copies up for grabs courtesy of OCEAN

A	Y	W	E	X	R	R	E	L	D	D	I	R
N	B	O	M	U	T	N	Q	R	E	K	O	J
O	M	A	I	B	A	X	Z	N	O	O	S	W
I	V	L	T	S	A	H	Z	J	R	T	Q	I
N	W	Q	T	M	Z	I	Y	Q	E	V	A	C
I	Z	I	C	H	A	N	C	E	H	S	V	U
M	E	R	O	B	I	N	T	R	R	I	Y	O
S	R	E	S	C	U	E	K	D	E	P	A	C
X	I	T	M	A	G	K	S	V	P	X	F	E
R	A	E	S	R	O	O	M	S	U	Y	F	A
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Q	A	C	C	O	L	A	D	E	N	D	G	H
W	I	N	X	D	P	U	K	D	S	T	I	B

BATWORDSEARCH PUZZLE

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

In **OCEAN**'s new game, **BATMAN** has to **RESCUE ROBIN** from the clutches of evil villains, **JOKER** and **RIDDLER**. Sliding down the Bat **POLE** into the bat **CAVE**, the **CAPED SUPERHERO** has to **FIND** the various **BITS** of Bat Equipment that he needs to succeed.

There are no less than one hundred and fifty **ROOMS**in the Batcave, and lots of them are full of **NASTIES**, contact with which sap our hero's strength.

Recently the game was awarded a **AMTIX ACCOLADE**and now here's your **CHANCE** to **WIN** your very own copy, courtesy of the nice people in Chateau Ocean.

A Competition **MINION**'s life is not an easy one, so please make sure you get your entries in to the Batman Competition as **SOON** as you can — or at the very latest by September 22nd so I've got lots of **TIME** to work out who has won. **FIFTY** copies of the game are on offer, so get moving folks!

Okay. Found all twenty two words in the wordsquare now? Good. Stop looking then. Now pop your entry into an envelope, making sure you've filled in your name and address and send it off to
BATMAN COMPETITION,
AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow,
Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive by September 22nd. Good luck!

STORY
N

decided to rope him in. Handing over a copy of a drawing utility, Jon asked Bernie Ritman to have a go at producing some *Batman* graphics. A partnership was born.

'A couple of days later Bernie came up with the first *Batman* graphics. He still produces most of his work 'by accident' almost, chucking a random collection of pixels on the screen and then spotting a detail that looks, maybe, like an eyebrow and then building up the rest of the character. It's a bit like finding pictures in inkblots, really!

Serious work on *Batman* began over Easter last year, at a time when the Amstrad Joyce was hardly even a rumour, let alone a reality. Jon works on a British Micro MIMI, using a home-grown assembler that allows him to work in parallel. The game code is written in sections — the general game code for the Z80 and three machine-specific modules that take care of screen, keyboard and sound and hook into the main body of game code. 'This approach makes conversions very straightforward', Jon explains, 'it took me a couple of days to produce the MSX version of *Batman*, and, once I'd got the details for the PCW machines, another couple of days had *Batman* running on the green screen'.

RATHER DIFFICULT

It wasn't quite that simple, of course. Getting details on the internal workings of the Joyce out of Amstrad proved rather difficult: 'They didn't seem to want to tell anyone about the workings of their new machine', Jon remembers, 'I was informed that they didn't want to tell anyone'. Dave Rooker from **DJL Software**, the company that does a lot of protection work for **Ocean** was also interested in the workings of the PCW machines, and between them Dave and Jon found out a lot about the computer by examining its internal programs. 'There was still a lot of confusion, it seemed. We'd get in touch with Amstrad and the people who wrote the software for the PCW and quite often got conflicting accounts of the way the internal programs worked.'

Then one day, everything dropped into place. During yet another phone call to Amstrad in which Jon was getting the 'we don't want to reveal details' line, he offered to sign non-disclosure documents. Ten minutes later, he was given all the details he needed to produce a *Batman* conversion. And wasn't asked to sign any documents!

Batman was the first arcade style game to appear on the Joyce, and unlike *Fairlight* (or an appalling *Space Invaders* clone) it uses shaded graphics. 'I'm surprised *Fairlight* doesn't use shading', Jon confesses, 'it's straightforward enough. Mind you, I was familiar with shading because the MIMI I program on has a very similar screen to the PCW, so it was natural enough to include shading on the PCW version of the game.'

STOMPING AROUND

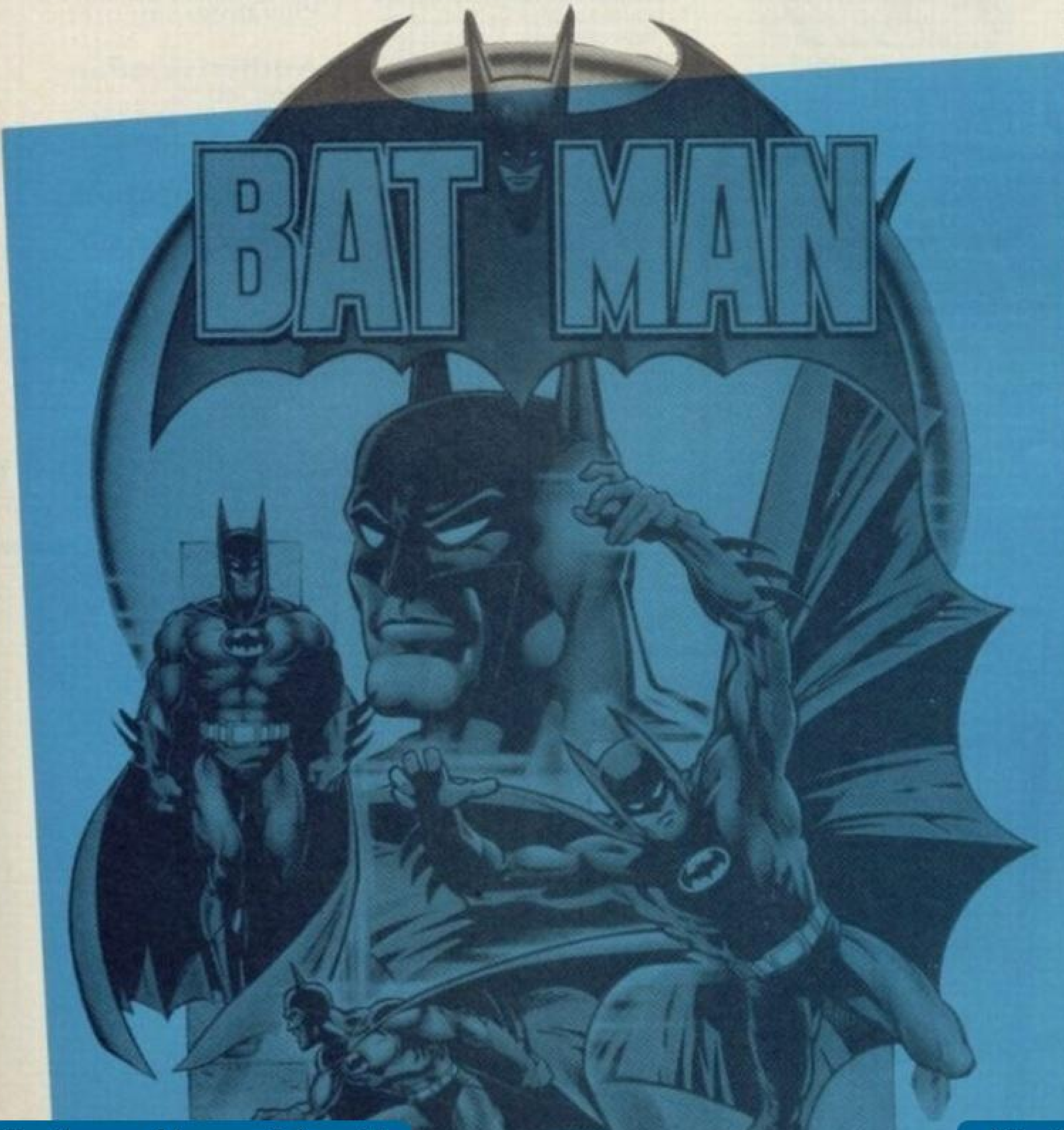
After a couple of days of intensive work, *Batman* was stomping around the green screen quite merrily, but in silence. Jon had decided that a few beeps from the on-board speaker was all that could be expected. Then inspiration hit him while he was playing around with the beeper, and he put in the code module that handled sound on the Spectrum. He played around with the ports, and then suddenly — BATSOUND! The game conversion was complete.

Now that the principle of converting games to the PCW has been firmly established in Jon's code, Joyce owners can expect to be able to play all Mr Ritman's new games. Two games are due to make their way out of Palmers Green and into the shops in time for Christmas: *Foot and Mouth*, and *Three and In*.

Foot and Mouth follows a similar format to *Batman* in terms of the 3D perspective and puzzle solving aspects of the game, but this time you will be in control of a pair of characters, two halves of a symbiotic organism. When they are together *Foot and Mouth* bear an uncanny resemblance to a human being who has been split at the waist. An evil entity has separated them when the game starts, an the overall objective is to reunite the two creatures. They each have separate abilities and are controlled independently (and rather differently) from one another. Puzzles abound in the game, which should contain some 300 rooms, and there are three kinds of problem: one that Foot can solve, one that Mouth can solve and a third type of puzzle that can only be attempted by the composite being.

Bernie Drummond is busily working on the *Foot and Mouth* graphics, and is being kept well busy — he's also booked to do the graphics for a football game that Jon is working on with Chris Clarke, with the working title of *Three and In*. The gameplay follows the rules of *Three in One*, a two a side footie game played against a goalie. One, two or three players should be able to join in the game, controlling large animated soccer players that can jump up and head the ball as well as kick it around, passing and shooting. As they run around, the players will turn their heads round, glancing behind them and at he start of the game player(s) have to choose their team from the pool of four footballers. Each player has individual skills when it comes to controlling and passing the ball, so selection at the start influences the likely outcome of a match. A musician is working on the soundtrack for Three and In, and Jon hopes to add as much realism to the finished program as possible.

With a little help from people like Jon Ritman, it looks like the Joyce has a firm future as a games machine as well as a serious business applications computer. Unfortunately, **Cascade** approached **Ocean** with details of their Joyce Joystick interface a week after *Batman* had been completed — but Jon promised that his next games would include routines that make them Joycestick compatible.



BRIDGE PLAYER 111

CP Software, £19.95 disk

Bridge is the most popular card game in the world and requires four people to sit round a table at the same time. This means that there have been many times a lone person would like to play 'a couple of rubbers' (bridge jargon for several hours of card play) and have had to find something less interesting to do, like watching TV.

With the advent of computers in the home there was a move to allow you to play board games and card games, that require two or more players, all by yourself. Draughts, poker, reversi and pontoon all became possible within the realm of computers as it soon became obvious people always wanted to play just one more game. Unfortunately there are some games that are very hard to play well and games like chess and bridge fall into this category. Luckily, this did not deter programmers, and computers began to play these very good games very badly. Chess has had more time spent on developing strong playing algorithms than bridge and it is only now that reasonable quality play can be expected from them.

Whatever next, a bridge game I actually enjoyed. Lots of nice options, clear instructions, and even some nicely balanced hands. I must admit I didn't enjoy being dealt three points and having to sit back and watch. But at least this makes you try to bid accurately. Just as in real bridge, you've got to try to make as many points while you've got the chance - the next hand the opposition could have all the points.

The only problem was the opposition, it wasn't exactly tough. Time and time again, you might be a little over optimistic with the bidding, only to be saved from huge penalties by inept play. The manual is quite good, although it falls between the two stalls of telling an experienced player nothing new, and not telling the beginner enough.

BRIDGE PLAYER has come quite a long way from its early inception on the Spectrum and has now materialised in Phoenix fashion as the fully matured version of its predecessors. The manual is now much better than previous attempts, as it explains the bidding conventions used so that for once, amateur and novice players can use it alongside the cooler pros but if you don't know what a void, a singleton or slam bidding is then I'm afraid this isn't for you. The graphics are simple but clean and do not detract from what is possibly one of the best bridge games on the market, it is just unfortunate that this quality wasn't achieved with CP's previous attempts, as this game now deserves a good look at by both hardened players and interested amateurs.

CP Software have now launched a re-worked version of *Bridge Player III* that will run on either of the two PCW machines.

The instructions are clear and set out in an eight page instruction leaflet that explains the ACOL bidding system used along with the Stayman, Blackwood and the strong two club convention that are all used in the bidding as needed.

The south position is always taken by the human player whose hand is shown on the right of the screen with the bidding on the left. After bidding has finished there is the option to start re-bidding the hand to get a more satisfactory contract for the game. After this the game commences.

If, after bidding, North and South are declarers then you have to play the hands with the computer playing the defenders' hands. If East and West won the bidding then the computer will play out the hands to try to make the contract. If during play the space bar is pressed then the computer recommends, and plays, a card from your hand. On screen during the game the screen displays your hand, the 'dummy' hand, the contract, the trick being played and the last round of cards.

After the hand has been played out there is an option to re-bid and re-play the hand, silly mistakes can be rectified in this way. The computer holds the score for the rubber and displays the score at the end of each game, showing points scored both above and below the line. In this way no scraps of folded paper and pencil scribblings are ever needed or left behind to annoy the host or hostess who has to clean up after the game.

There are several useful options that can be accessed at the end of any particular game. These include listing the deal to a printer, setting the speed of play and the number of points in the hand dealt to North and South so that it is easier to always be in a stronger points position than East and West and therefore allowing practice in bidding to the correct convention.

This is the best bridge program on any of the popular computers at the moment and has much going for it. If you often want to play and are unable to get three other players, or want to try and improve your bridge play then this is the program to buy. CP Software have produced an excellent product that is a joy to use and I hope they keep it up.

Presentation 55%
Manual was better, still not that good though.

Graphics 53%
OK, but nothing special.

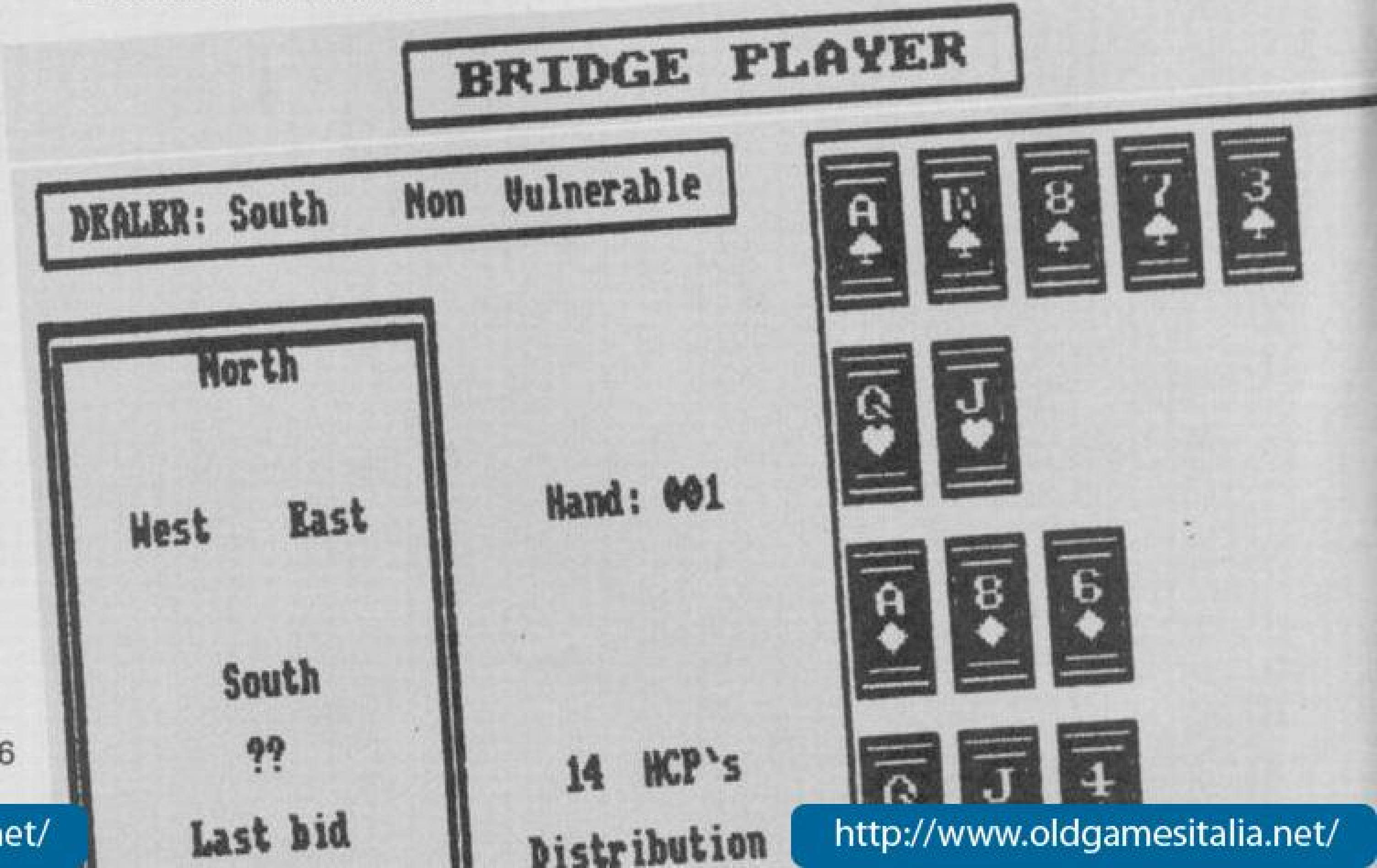
Sound 38%
Passing beeps, might have been used more daringly.

Playability 73%
Play flows smoothly.

Addictive qualities 70%
If you like Bridge, you'll like this.

Value for money 65%
A decent price for a decent game.

Overall 63%
A hit with the bridge players at AMTIX! Towers.


BRIDGE PLAYER

DEALER: South Non Vulnerable

North

West East

South

??

Last bid

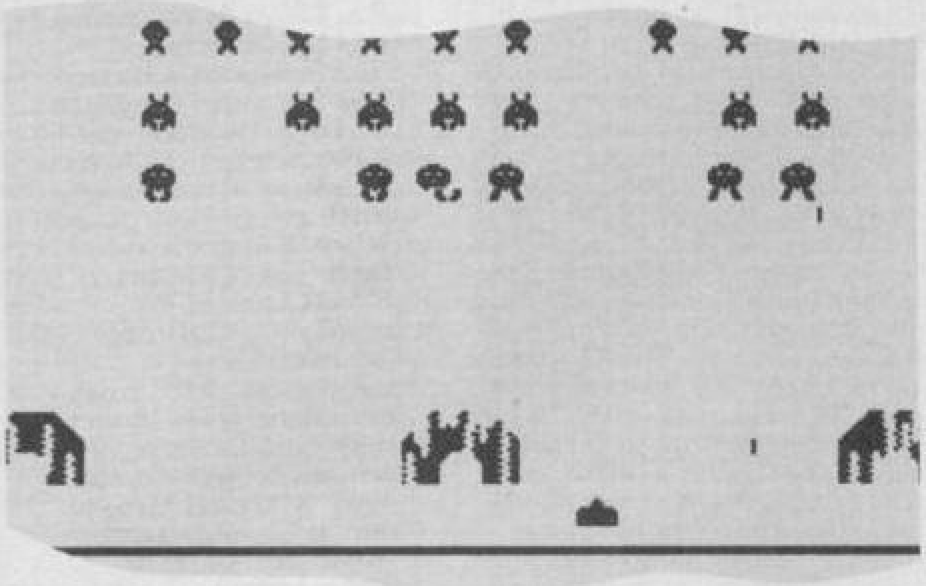
Hand: 001

14 HCP's

Distribution

SUPERNOVA CLASSIC INVADERS

Gemini, £19.95 disk



With all the new games software that seems to be coming out for the 8256/8512 machines, it seemed inevitable that sooner or later someone would come out with a space invaders' game. Hopefully, this will be the only version that will ever be released, thank the maker, and is really only for nostalgia freaks.

In it's own little way this program is quite good, with full advantage of the wider screen being taken as well as a full set of space creeps to blast into the nether world. It also has the random base ship that casually flies by now and then (usually coming to a sticky end). The controls are quite strange to master as it is impossible to move and fire at the same time, also if the fire key is pressed while you are moving the base stops where it is until you take you release all the keys and then press the control you wish to use next, all of which makes for a very difficult game to use.

Space Invaders was never like this, at least I hope it wasn't. No, the image that sticks in my mind is one of fast, smooth, arcade action which the Joyce version has totally failed to capture. At first I thought it was due the limited capabilities of dear Joyce, but on seeing BATMAN, I am left disgusted. I'm afraid I have treated the game as a normal computer game, rather than a Joyce novelty, and in this context it falls short of anything remotely connected to a quality version of such a golden oldie.

Well, I suppose this is the silly season. So let's be kind to this venerable old man of a game. One of the nicest features is the disintegrating bases which crumble quite well instead of the more primitive way of just erasing large square areas where the missile hit. The collision detection is faultless, even explosions and the invaders' bombs can be hit, though the explosions are nothing more than lines radiating out from the centre of a UDG. The sound is disappointing, being only a monotonous bleep as the invaders move, when you consider the quality of sound on BATMAN you would think it fairly easy to incorperate a whooww or even a white noise crussshh.

All in all the game is a competent version of Space Invaders that should rekindle a few memories of days gone by. The one thing missing is the coloured celluloid strips to put on your screen, just like the original.

If you are going to produce a version of space invaders - especially at this sort of price - it had better be authentic. One of the reasons Space Invaders caught on was that there were a number of strategies that could be used to achieve that all important high score. CLASSIC INVADERS manifestly fails to achieve this; whatever this game is it is definitely not Space Invaders as it is known and loved by millions. I found myself not caring whether I lived or died. It became quite amusing to see if you could clear a whole screen without moving from one spot. The another irritating aspect was the way if you fired whilst moving, the base stopped, and you had to release the move key and press it again. This sort of thing can (and did) cost lives.

Presentation 21%
Just the bare essentials.

Graphics 20%
Just like a very early Spectrum game!

Sound 15%
The sound will bring back early memories too.

Playability 40%
To be fair this game is always very playable.

Addictive qualities 20%
Nothing compelling at all.

Value for money 10%
At £20 it's a rip off.

Overall 15%
Really a miserable blast from the past.

BrunWord

*** including a 'Spelling Check' routine**

"All in all BrunWord is a very competent programme incorporating many features missed from word processors double its price . . . it is very well priced and should become a classic word processor. . . . *Amtix August 1986*

BrunWord 6128 or 464

This comprehensive word processor is a completely original programme written to avoid the complications and slow response associated with many word processors. The true print format is always displayed in the 80 column mode but BrunWord can be used equally well in either 80 or 40 column modes.

The right margin is justified using a complex process that adds spaces after punctuation and then between words alternating left and right towards the centre of the line. (Tasword always adds spaces right to left which makes the left side look cramped).

Insert/Overwrite, variable margins, right-justify whole text or one paragraph, block save, move, copy, delete, word delete/undelete, search routines, word wrap. True display super/subscript numbers, col/line/page, word count, free memory. Embedded printer commands, multiple copies, page throw markers, odd and even page headers and footers, page numbers, sequence printing of files with correct paging. Adjustable TABs, help menus, RAM disc feature, securitry code. Recognises CPC464 with Dktronics 64K or 256K memory.

BrunSpell 6128 or 464

This ultra fast spelling checker has a 22,000 word dictionary (expandable to over 30,000) and takes just 15 seconds to check a 450 word page. When a possible error is found it can be edited, ignored, saved or the "help" facility will display the nearest words it can find. NECESAY is near enough for NECESSARY. (Spelling checker takes 60 seconds on CPC464 with no memory expansion. Cassette version has 10,000 word dictionary expandable to 12,000 and takes 15 seconds).

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For CPC464, CPC664 or CPC6128
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Brunning Software

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Telephone: 0245 252854 (24 Hours)

BATMAN

Ocean, PCW 8256/8512, Disk £14.95, Keyboard Only

Not one ZAP POW or ZONK to be seen, never mind. The game is much better than the other versions, except for the Blue Bottle sound effects which although crude are adequate, it's faster too. Just like FAIRLIGHT you get a real feeling of size, especially on the screens some of which show off three of the normal sized screens at once. The only problem I had with this game was time, not enough hours in the day to play it as much as I want. Eventually all these 3D games will be converted, I look forward to seeing MOVIE and NIGHTSHADE.

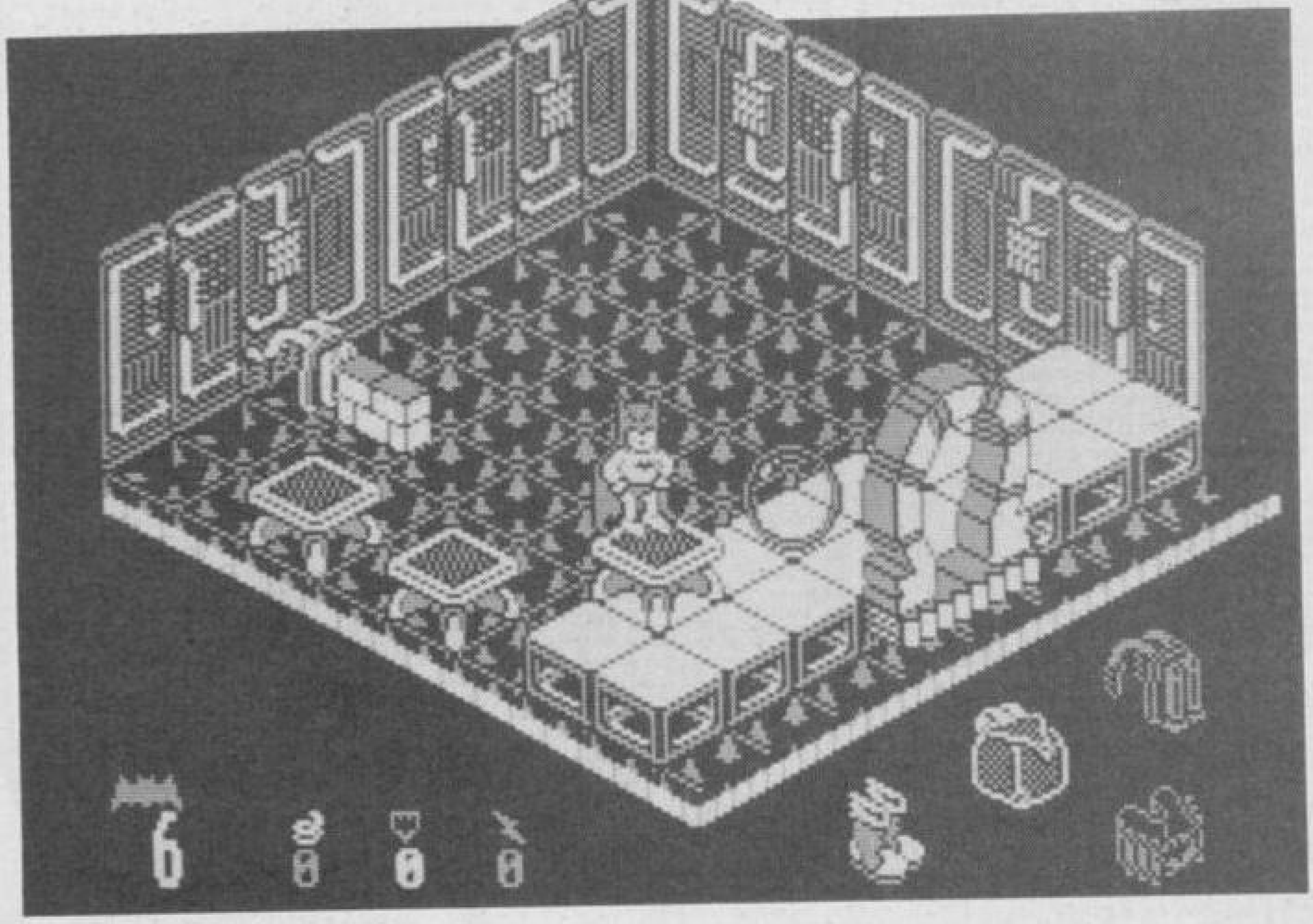
Holy PCWs BATMAN, we're now featured in glorious green-o-vision. This is the first REAL game to be switched on to a PCW, and believe me it is going to take a lot of beating. It hasn't suffered at all during the conversion, in fact if anything it has improved, the colours aren't so hard on the eyes and it appears to have that little extra burst of speed. For the PCW squeaker the sound has been wonderfully implemented and works very well. So, if you're fed up with your data bases, spreadsheets and word processors, give Batty a chance he'll certainly give your PCW a new burst of life.

In downtown Gotham City, Batman is worried. His life long companion, Robin, has been captured by that nasty ol' meanie, The Penguin. Pausing only to grab his batcloak and batpants, Batman slides down the Batpole in search of his trusty Batmobile; but calamity has struck. Robin was in the process of repairing the batmobile when he was abducted, so it is now scattered around the batcaves in six separate parts. However, before Batman can begin to retrieve the Batmobile parts he has to collect up all his essential batequipment, like the Batpack, Batboots, Batjet and the Batbelt.

The game opens with Batman sliding down the batpole into the batcaves, which are shown in ultimatesque 3D perspective, but wait, what's this?, a whole new section of batcaves that Batman has never seen before. The new batcaves are full of lion headed beasts and other assorted nasties which are all out to make Batty's life a misery. The structure of the caves doesn't appear very strong, with blocks crumbling and exploding all around, it makes Batty's quest just that little more difficult. However, fear not, scattered around the place are various batpills, which look like mini Batmen, and give Batty increased powers over a limited period. The time in which they remain effective 'is shown slowly ticking away under the power icon.

Other useful things are the batstones which can be picked up and kept. These only come into play when you die as they purpose is to reinstate you in the room you last picked them up. Conveyor belts and sinking platforms also provide problems for Batty, but can also be used to his advantage. Some connecting doors can only be reached by jumping on objects, luckily the batcaves seem to be littered in elephant's feet and art nouveau tea pots which serve the purpose well. Batty is eager to rescue Robin so if you leave him standing in one place too long he will begin tapping his foot impatiently. So, hurry up and collect them batbits Bat freaks and then you can get on with the job at hand, rescuing Robin, which isn't in the game. So, may we expect a Batty II?.

Hah, just when Dad thought his Joyce was safe from your grimey little mits, here comes nana-nana-nana-nana-nana-nana-nana-nana-BATMAN to make his life a misery. Just slap this in the old disk drive, hide that dullsville old Locoscript disk in the bottom of a bin and away you go. It's a hard choice between this and FAIRLIGHT really for Joyce game of the moment. The only real solution is to buy both. This is easier to get in to, and with all those rooms — some real toughies — it'll keep you going for ages. The sound really is something - I got a real buzz out of it (buzz, geddit). As pure 3D games go, possibly not up to ALIEN 8 standards, except in the graphics where it knocks the Ashby boys into a cocked Pith Helmet.



Presentation 90%
Excellent, plenty of options.

Graphics 95%
Marvellous adaptation from the cartoons.

Sound 82%
For the Joyce, very good.

Playability 88%
Great mix of puzzles and arcade action.

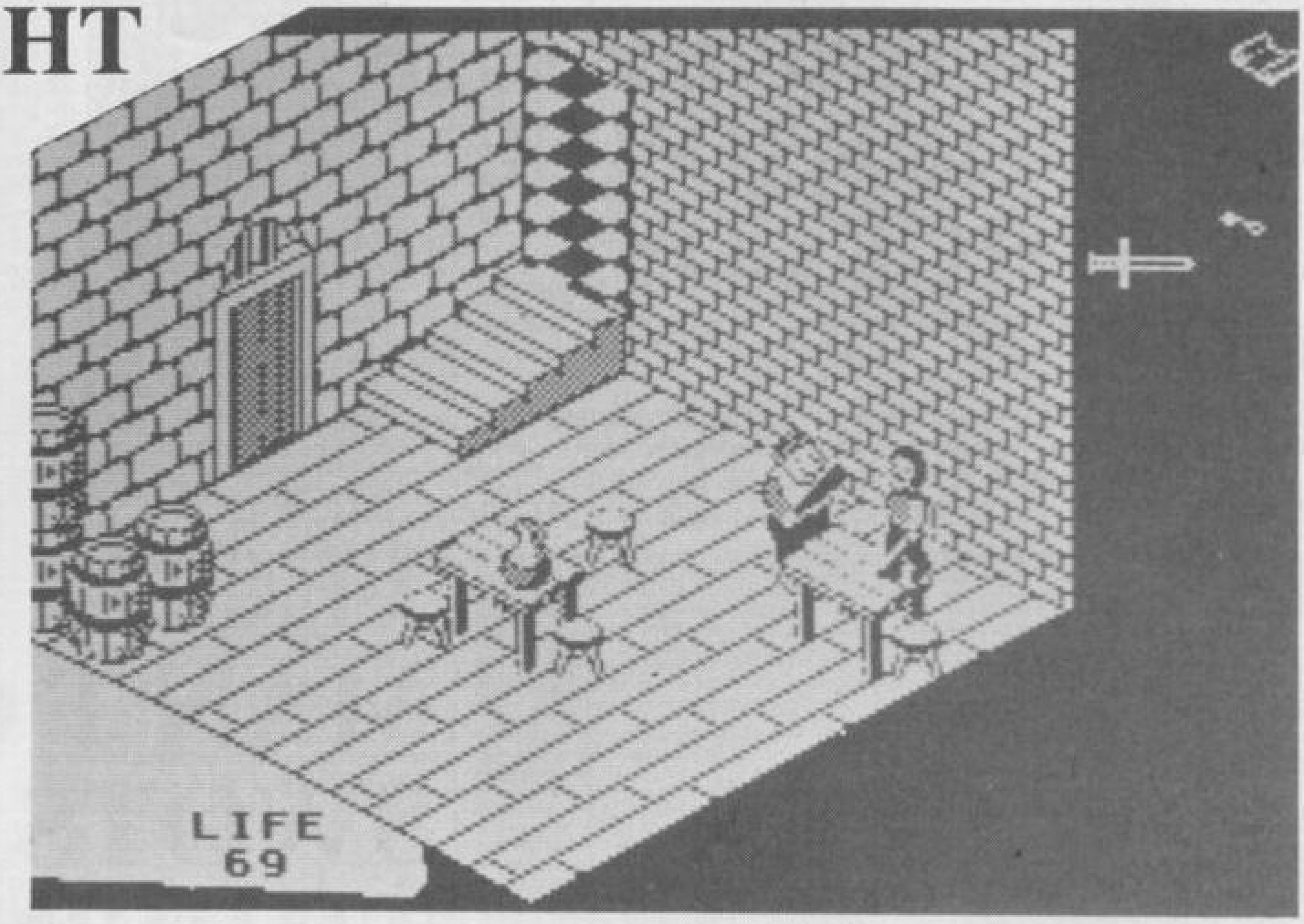
Addictive qualities 94%
You've just gotta find Robin!.

Value for money 90%
At the same price as the other versions it's very good.

Overall 92%
Give your Joyce a treat, give her Batman!.

FAIRLIGHT

The Edge, £14.95 disk



The land of *Fairlight* was once a jolly, happy place. But, what with one thing and another, public spending cuts, unemployment, and someone imprisoning the nice old Wizard, things just ain't what they used to be. The land is ruled with a tyrannical iron hand and darkness has descended on the area (sounds familiar). An intrepid traveller arrives in this blighted land, and being a public spirited kind of bloke, he nips along to the castle where the old Wiz is in chokey, and sets about trying to release the chap. Not that he's got any choice, as soon as he got inside the castle, the Wizard blocked the entrance so our man would have to rescue him to get out.

Now most people would just sit down in the corner and sulk, but things being the way they are in computer games, the intrepid fellow sets forth into the depths of Castle Avars. The game uses a 3D technique which The Edge has called 'Worldmaker'. Superficially it resembles an Ultimate type game, but with some interesting innovations. The game is screen based, you walk out of one section, the screen goes blank for a few seconds, and then you reappear in a new location. The difference is that the game remembers the precise location of all objects and creatures within a room even after you leave it. This means it is no longer possible to have a second shot at a room if a mistake is made. So if you boot an object you need under a table by mistake, it's pull the plug time.

There are about fifty rooms altogether, which does not sound a great deal, but due to the amount of detail in each room, there seems a lot to the game. Each room may well have as many as a dozen objects in it. Each object also has real world characteristics. If the barrel is picked up, the player is fully loaded, whereas he can happily stuff all five pockets full of food. They also react differently to being kicked: a piece of chicken will whizz under the nearest table, a barrel will respond with a dull thud. The player begins with 100 life points and these are used up fighting the various nasties guarding bits of the castle. Gobbling nice bits of chicken and guzzling wine restores the spirits. A lot of the objects needed to complete the quest are out of reach. In the usual manner, other objects have to be stacked on top of one another for the player to climb up.

The pot plants are particularly useful for this, and seem surprisingly resilient to being trampled on. The object of the game is to find the 'Book of Light'. Thus armed, the player can resist the nasties that guard the Wiz. Obviously mapping is essential, although the true three dimensional layout of the castle makes it tricky. The loading screen shows you the view from the Wizard's room which obviously helps.

Just when I'd got over the shock of BATMAN on the 8256, then along comes this game. Infuriatingly hard, visually stunning, and nicely detailed, this game has raised the stakes in the Joyce games' market. The game generates bags of atmosphere with its finely detailed and nicely animated graphics, and really loses nothing in the conversion from other 'proper' games machines. There is a nice balance of strategy and dexterity, and the sword fight bits are great fun. Like all such games, everything is easy once you've cracked it, but, despite the relatively small size of the castle, it'll take a long time to solve. The lack of a save option was a shame. This means that if you are trying to solve a knotty problem quite far into the game, and get killed, it can be annoying to keep having to go all the way through again.

Seeing the opening screen on FAIRLIGHT was rather like experiencing true 70mm projection at a cinema for the first time. As the title screen uses the full width of the 8256 display, the effect is somewhat dramatic when you're used to CPC games. More important however, is the fact that FAIRLIGHT is an excellent conversion of a superb game. It's highly playable, beautifully detailed and full of variety. There's nothing more to say except that this is an excellent choice for someone looking for a thought provoking and well animated game.

When I saw FAIRLIGHT on the 6128 I was amazed how a 3D game could give such an overall impression of size, unlike the Ultimate games which tended to seem rather cramped. The game has lost nothing in the conversion, except for the awful music on the original, and it soon had me hooked yet again. All in all a good way to break the boredom of using databases and locoscript.

Presentation 81%
Jolly little story, pretty artwork.

Graphics 94%
About as good as you're going to get.

Sound 55%
Peizio plink, plink, strikes again.

Playability 80%
Clues in pack help solve the problems.

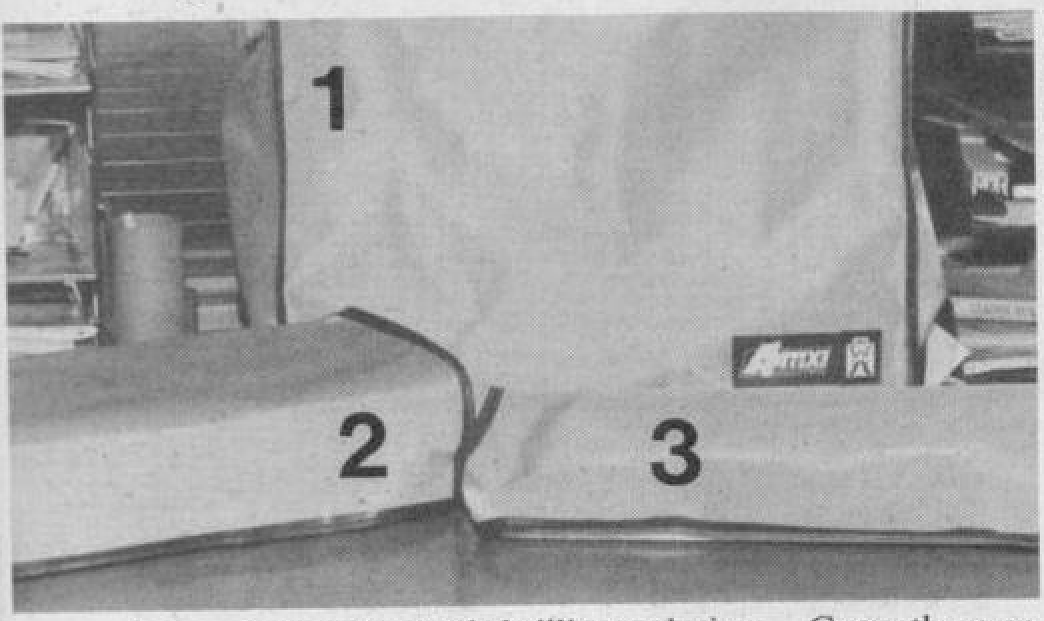
Addictive qualities 86%
A toughie, but you'll want to see more.

Value for money 84%
Small maze, but perfectly formed.

Overall 89%
State of the art Joyce-wise.

WRAP UP YOUR JOYCE IN A NICE COSY COVER

Let's face it, our Joyce machines are delicate things, they must be treated with the same love and affection as you would treat your nearest and dearest, be it your wife, pet Beagle — whatever. So we nice people here at AMTIX! have come up an utterly brilliant solution — Cover them up with a warm AMTIX! dustcover.



AMTIX! have produced a unique dustcover, in a subtle shade of grey with black double stitching and emblazened with the new AMTIX! logo. The covers come in three parts, one for the monitor, one for the keyboard, and one to keep your printer clean. Totally resilient from dust, liquids and all sorts of household nasties they are exclusivly available through AMTIX! mail order for only £9.95 for all three covers, and including post and package.

We are so sure that they won't rip, split or tear we're giving a two year guarantee with them. Make your cheques or postal orders for £9.95 to **Newsfield Limited**, we are convinced these are a major contibution to Joyce safety.

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A Practical Reference Guide to Word Processing on the Amstrad PCW8256 and PCW8512
F.A. WILSON
GETTING STARTED
AMSTRAD
PCW 8256/8512
WORD PROCESSOR
Practical Amstrad Word Processing
David Lawrence and Mark England

TECH MAN T C SWOTS UP ON THREE BOOKS FOR THE PCW MACHINES

The real reason for buying the PCW machines is its skills as a word processor, but having said that, the games are getting better and more in number. After wading through the short manual supplied, some people may feel a little 'blinded', but book publishers do not miss opportunities and for these confused people there are three new books from three different publishers. They just love making money by rewriting the manual, although to be fair all are decidedly big improvements.

The largest, and cheapest, comes from **Bernard Babani** books and has the rather wordy title of *Practical Reference Guide To Word Processing On The Amstrad PCW8256 and PCW8512*, which comes with the usual 2 colour cover and toilet roll pages. The book, itself, gives you a very detailed tutorial with helpful screen shots along the way, but leaves no leeway for mistakes as you work through it. As with all the other books a full tutorial on how to boot up Locoscript and make working disks for your own use is incorporated. On the whole the book is worth £5.95 but I would have preferred it on better quality paper.

The *Practical Guide To Word Processing* from **Sunshine Publishing** is a gem of a book, with very clear instructions, and nice paper. This book generally follows the same style as the previous one, but with the added bonus of a very good index. The book is split up into sections, each dealing with a specific part of Locoscript, and each assuming that you have read all the other sections up to that point. This may seem a little confusing, but then again, how many books do you start with on the last chapter. At £7.95 it's well worth considering.

Getting Started With The Amstrad PCW8256/8512 Word Processor from **Phoenix**, is written by Susan Rogers, a teacher, and is probably the best book for those of you with less experience of computers than the average PCW user, as it follows the set up of many of the school text books. It costs £7.95.

Each book has its own particular merits. It just a case of paying your money and taking your choice.

TAKING THE CONFUSION OUT OF WORKING YOUR JOYCE

We take a look at two audio tapes from REEL TIME offering practical advice on operating your PCW8256

So you've got your PCW8256, you plug it in, switch on and it sits there bleeping at you with a bright screen. So you turn to the manual and get completely confused on page one. From then on life is hell. It's a familiar story but there's no need to despair. There is a way to get around the problem and it comes in the form of two audio tapes from **REEL TIME** entitled *Using your PCW Micro Computer*.

The entire tape time is 3 hours and you still only get an insight into the world of the Joyce, but in such a way that even mere mortals who may never have used a computer before can understand.

The first tape deals mainly with how to get the system up and running, along with the basics of CP/M. Firstly you start with the DIR command, which lists all the programs on the current disc, very clearly describing its use. Then suddenly the instructions get quite complicated for the beginner with the explanation of how the system can treat drive A as either A or B, this could cause problems trying to remember which disk goes in the drive at any time. At each stage in the tutorial the tape contains *beeps* which tell you to switch off the cassette until the machine, or the user, has finished the current operation. There was one time, however, that the tape gave me an instruction but then followed up by saying 'But First. . .' which can cause some confusion.

The tape on BASIC also assumes that the user has had no experience with programming before and takes him or her through the basic principles of MALLARD BASIC, including the use of conditional statements, jumps, and loops, which are the main parts of a program in any computer language. The tutorial tries to stop the user from picking up sloppy habits but in no way tries to teach him/her programming techniques, ie ways of making a program more compact and/or run faster, though these will come with practice.

The tapes are by no means a way to learn how to use CP/M and BASIC to their full extent but are a good way to start to learn the principles that will make learning from other books much easier. So if you already use CP/M and LOCOSCRIPT to some degree it may be better for you to buy a book on the subject but for anyone who is just starting out then, these tapes, along with the second set which are a guide to using LOCOSCRIPT, are definitely a good buy.

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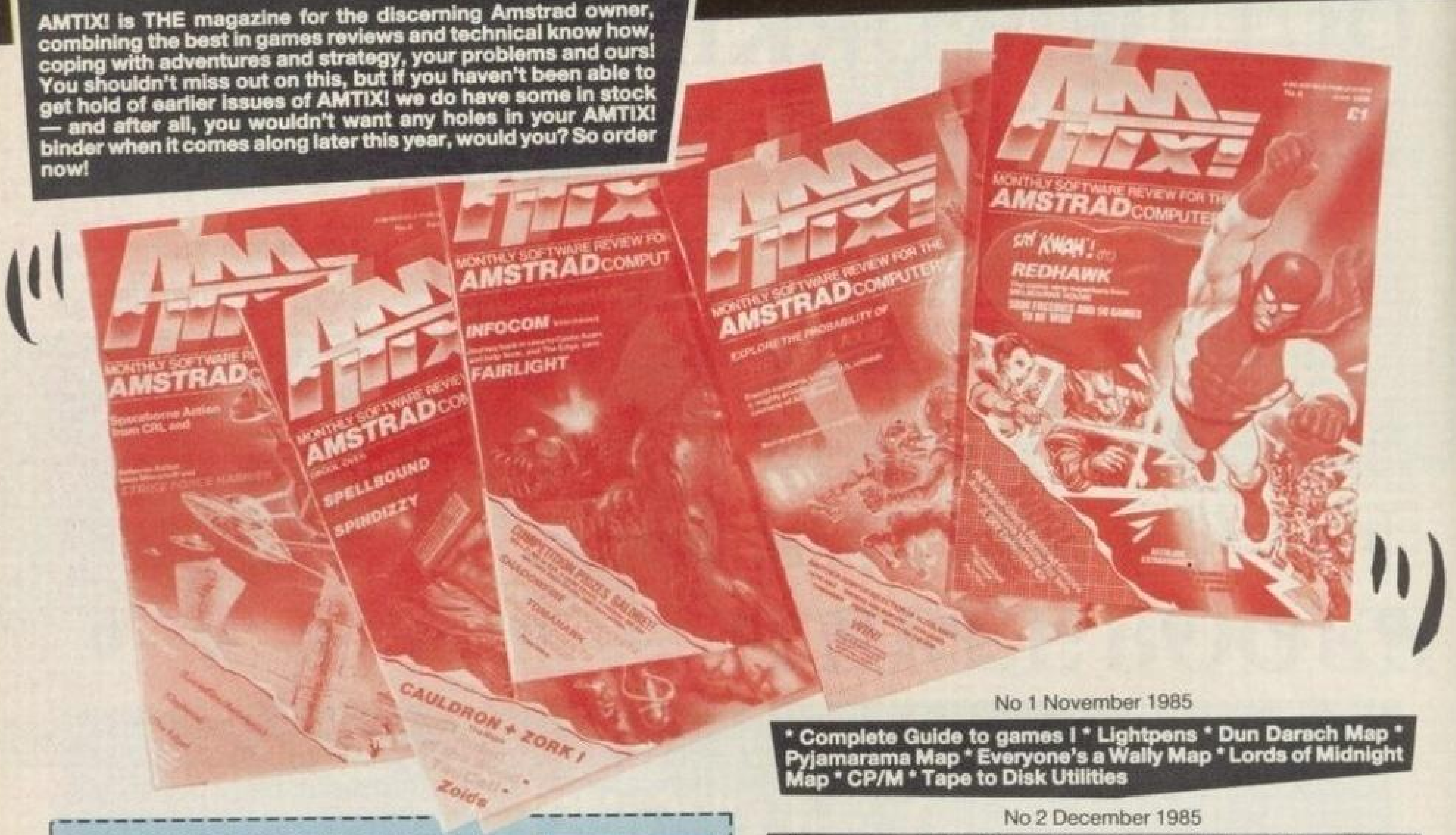

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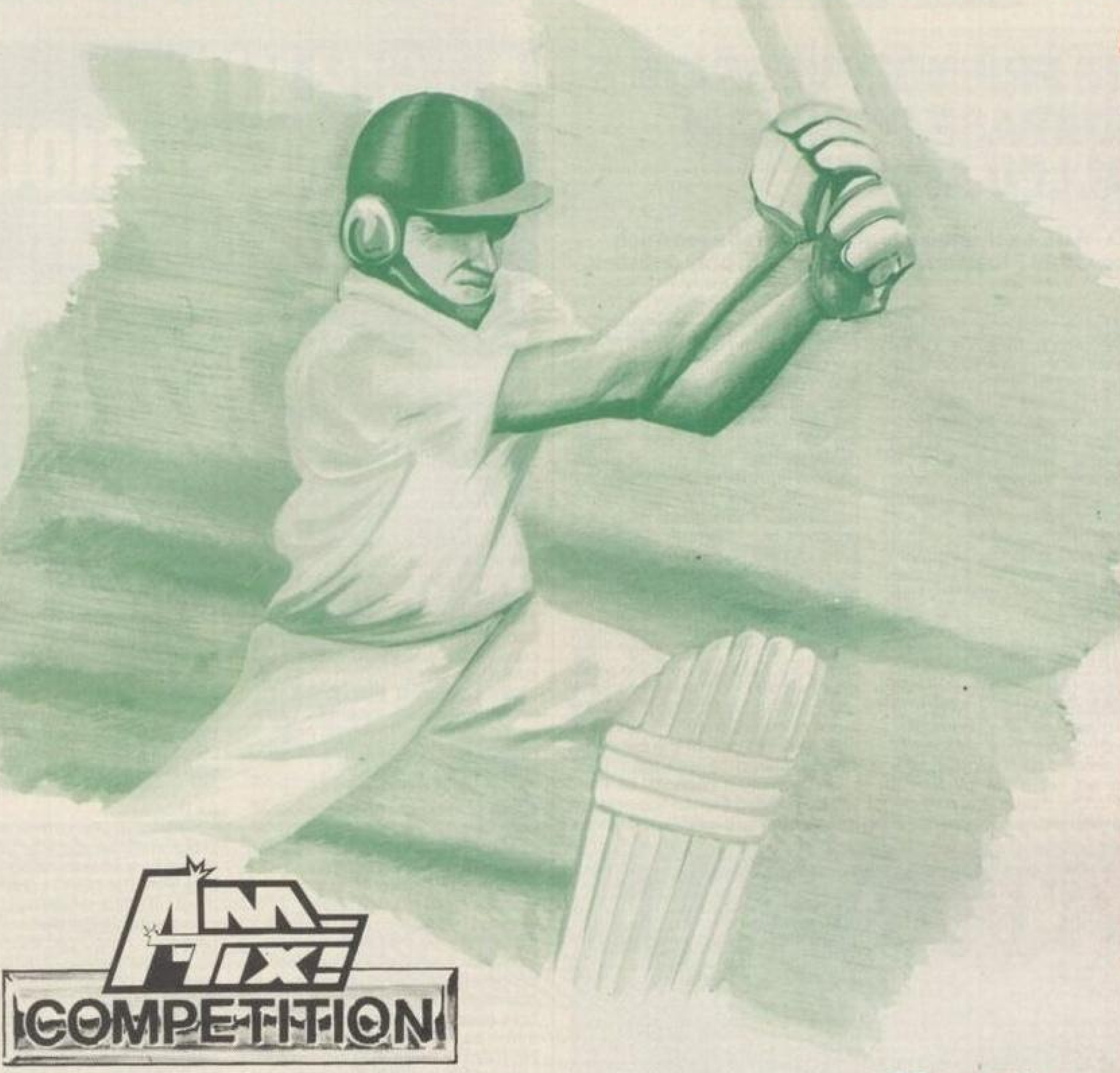
ANSWER FIVE QUESTIONS AND WIN A CRICKET BAT AUTOGRAPHED BY GRAHAM GOOCH COURTESY OF AUDIOGENIC



AMTIX! COMPETITION

Sunday afternoon, dear readers, is usually your minion's day of rest, as it takes time to recover from the tribulations of lugging mailbags up and down the stairs all week. I am sometimes allowed a day off. However, a few weeks ago whilst I was hiding from the unsavoury attentions of Aunt Aggie, the Jiffy Bag Queen, a sharp rap at the door announced the blunt presence of Lee, Tony and Dick all clad in their whites, with Saffron trailing behind clutching a picnic basket. Enthused by such a plethora of grub, your humble minion rushes out to greet the glorious letters person. 'Ah ha, trapped' says she, and in a whirlwind of white your minion is stripped down to his designer boxer shorts and hastily redressed in some kind of cricket outfit.

Before you could say 'Gerroff you horrid brolly person' there I was down at the Ludlow Cricket Club in to bat for the AMTIX! team. The whole crowd, mainly consisting of Crumbly's faithful retainers, were ecstatic — The AMTIX! team only needing another two runs to win the series with yours truly to face the last over. Eeeek!, thinks your minion as the first ball comes spinning at him from the powerful hands of the CRASH team captain, girlie tipster, Hannah Smiff and, waccko — ball comes straight at me, hits right in the middle of the bat, ricochets back like a bullet — didn't stand a chance! Minion is caught out. Curse, curse go I. 'Hurrah!' goes girlie tipster.

So a long plod back to the pavillion was made where Malcolm was no doubt waiting for some kind of explanation for my abysmal playing; But, dear readers, no acerbic rebuffs, no threats of double mailbag duties — Malcolm just looked tearfully at me. You see the dear Crumbly one was upset because being immobilised to the old Bathcahir means he can't get out and run the field any more. Now, your minion is a kind one at heart and sympathises with Crumbly's predicament and so offered him the chance to come back to the Broom cupboard and play a quick game of **Audiogenic**'s *GRAHAM GOOCH'S TEST CRICKET*.

Many weeks have passed since then and Crumbly has become a new man, a veritable expert with the old bat 'n' ball. He likes the game so much that he has arranged with **Audiogenic** to give away a real cricket bat signed by Graham Gooch himself, so us more able bodies can go out and play it for real. That's the first prize, there's also thirty runner up prizes of the game with the cassette inlay signed by GRAHAM GOOCH. Five answers are all we need, on a postcard which must arrive by the morning of the 15th of September.

The questions are:

1: What is Graham Gooch's highest score in Test Cricket up to the 30th of July 1986?
2: Which county cricket team has the same name as a famous Football ground.
3: Which is the only First Class team never to have appeared in a one day final at Lords?
4: Which was the last country to be granted Test status?
5: Name one other First Class team, apart from Essex and England, that Gooch has played for.

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THE FRIENDLY VERSATILE DATABASE PROGRAM CALLED ATLAST

DAVID PAUL examines a multi-file database which runs on CP/M Plus and can operate with only one disk drive

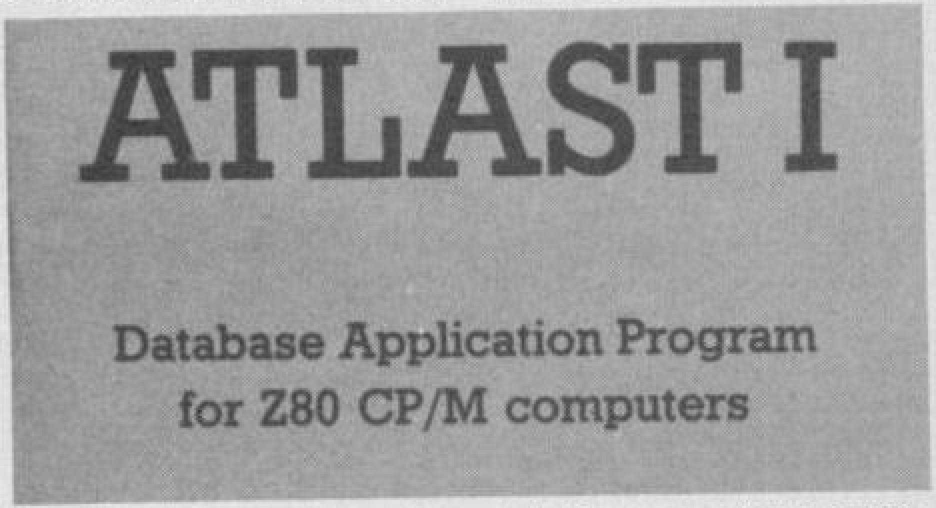
ATLAST is a relational multi-file database which runs on CP/M Plus on either the PCW 8256/8512 or on the CPC 6128. The program is able to operate with only one disk drive present. Some prior knowledge of CP/M systems and operation is assumed as it is necessary to transfer files using the CP/M Pip utility before using the program. Failure to do this will cause the program to stop with a 'disk full' notice as the two main files on the disc — Database Define (DBDEF) and Database Use (DBUSE) take up 71K and 73K respectively leaving little room to open a new database file.

If you follow the advice set out in the manual you will have planned your database well in advance of sitting down at the computer keyboard. If you have an idea of what is needed then you can proceed to set up a file by typing 'DBDEF'. The maximum number of fields allowed in a record file is 20 — as the fields can have up to 99 elements this gives a total of up to 1980 field elements. Field types can be one of the following:— Alpha, Upper Case, Integer, Fixed Point, Floating Point, date, Time, Constant or Serial. Data can be entered either from the keyboard or from an ASCII (text) file produced by a word processor, for example *Wordstar* or other CP/M database program provided that certain conditions are met — there must be no gaps between records, for example.

Error trapping is good and there is an inbuilt database repair facility to restore the integrity of data which might have been damaged by the computer being switched off before a file is closed or by the program reporting an I/O error caused by lack of disk space. *ATLAST* will normally close all database files automatically before finishing. The screen handling and commands for the keyboard are set separately for each of the programs DBDEF and DBUSE. On the CPC 6128 *ATLAST* will give a screen display of 23 x 80 and on the PCW machines the display will be 31 x 90. Print options are available whilst defining, editing or listing files and screen prompts deal with size of paper and the number of lines of text per page. To help first time users familiarise themselves with the program two example databases are included — club-membership and cashbook accounting and these can be modified by following the help pages in the manual.

Any calculation that you might meet whilst handling the cashbook file must be done separately as *ATLAST* does not have any calculation facility. If you are running the program with only one disk drive the size of the database will be limited to less than 100K and a minimum capacity of 170K will be needed (hence the need to transfer the DBDEF file to another disk). If you are going to be successful with *ATLAST* the 57 page program manual — with its small blue print on blue paper — must be studied carefully and the example files worked through to understand the workings of the program. The manual states *ATLAST* is a friendly, convenient and versatile database program for CP/M — without a good grounding in the CP/M operating system which the program assumes — many will find setting up an *ATLAST* database requires quite some effort. With a manual which is not particularly user-friendly in its approach, a newcomer to computing, looking for a database system, would soon be asking, why, in this age of powerful but inexpensive technological marvels, he had to put so much effort into it himself.

ATLAST is published by **Rational Solutions** and costs £49.95 for both the PCW 8256/8512 and CPC 6128.



A TOOLKIT FOR THE SERIOUS PROGRAMMER

Arnor come up with another goodie to add to their impressive range

Utopia is another in the ROM based range of utilities from **Arnor Ltd**, extending the impressive range with a programmer's toolkit. The package comes in the form of a 16k EPROM which plugs into the expansion port, but is unfortunately designed to be the first 'extra' to be connected, and therefore makes the addition of other ROM based software very difficult, especially for those that are designed to fit snuggly to the back of the machine. Some 49 new commands are added to the BASIC which all may be used from within a program, though the routines are really meant for program development. The 30 page manual is quite clear, though an index would have been appreciated, with examples of some of the more complicated commands.

The commands themselves are mainly of use to programmers though anyone requiring a disk management system is also catered for, as are train spotters (hackers) who may wish to deprotect and change other peoples programs. ACCESS is just such a command and allows the protection, deprotection of programs on a disk as well as hiding and showing them to the directory, invaluable for tidying up a disk etc. DELETE is a glorified version of the ERA command but allows selective deletion when a wildcard is specified, ie if IDELETE, "*.*" was entered then each filename would be shown up in turn so that you may say yea or nay to whether the file is to be deleted or not. DISCCOPY is obvious but does not allow the copying of customised formats or disks with unformatted tracks, like those used by most software manufacturers, while DISCTEST is just another form of the verify command on the 6128/8256/512 or DISCCHK on the 464/664.

Formatting of a disk can now be done in about 30 seconds with the FORMAT command, but only DATA and SYSTEM formats are supported, then again the VENDOR and IBM formats are only of specialist use anyway. DEDIT is a full sector editor as used by many other machines, each half sector being edited in turn and then written back to the disk with the changes made. This could be used to change the directory or repair a section of the disk, though it is possible to do more harm than good.

The CALL command can be used to access the firmware jumpblock, something not usually possible from basic, with parameters being passed in a following list, eg ICALL, &BB68, 5, 0, 0, 96 would speed up the tape save speed. The COPY command copies from the default input device to the default input device, ie if the tape deck was selected for input and the disk drive for output then the command would copy from TAPE to DISK.

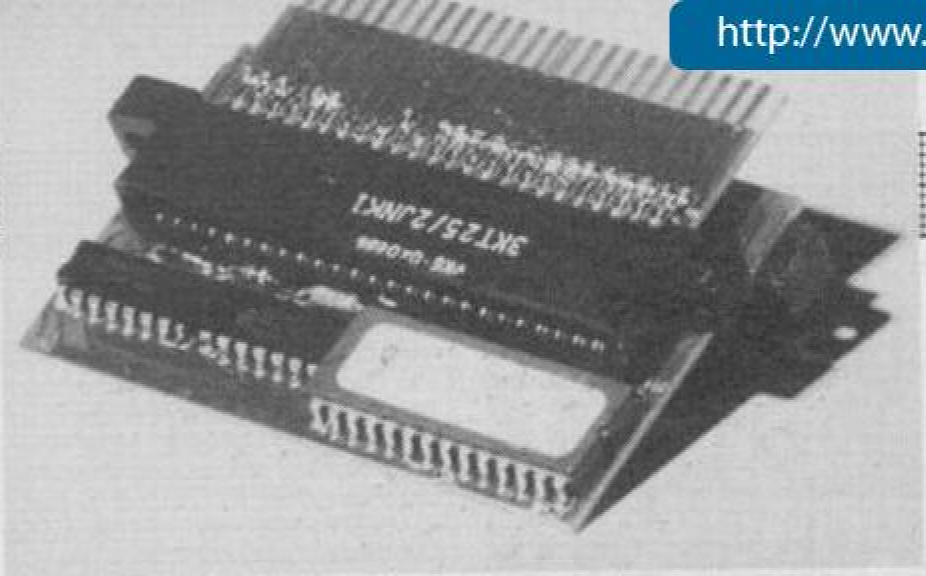
INFO is just a header reader giving information on start addresses, file lengths, file type (Binary, ASCII.etc) and the entry address if it is machine code. There is, however, for disk drive owners another piece of information on the total size of the file including the header etc, though there seems little use for this.

With LINK you can recover programs that you may have protected by mistake and now wish to edit. First the LOAD command must be used, which loads a file into memory regardless of file type or memory settings, and follow it up by LINK, which should now make the program usable again. The SAVE command is used in the same way as the LOAD command being able to save a program or data to disk regardless of the memory setting but its greatest use is that code may be saved from one location but the header may contain a different load address, making the movement of code very easy. SAVEA on the other hand saves a block of memory as an ASCII file. The SPOOL command copies any screen data entered to the disk until a SPOOLOFF command is entered. This could be used to store a screen layout as an ASCII file and be recovered later, very good for spying on what people have been doing with your computer.

STATUS give you information on program length, first and last free memory locations, width settings, free memory etc, and gives you some insight into how well you are doing memory wise.

VERIFY checks an internal memory block with that on disk or tape and reports any errors, the 6128/664/464 machines do have this ability but someone forgot to implement it in basic. VTEXT does the same thing for an ASCII file.

The user defined keys may be inspected using the TOKENS command which gives details on the keys from 128 to 159, these keys are set to UTOPIAs own set



every time the machine is switched on. NOKEYS will destroy all expansion tokens except the CTRL ENTER sequence.

GDUMP gives a shaded screen dump to the DMP-1 DMP 2000 or any EPSON or fully EPSON compatible printer including the CANNON and KAGA TAXAN range though unfortunately we where unable to test this due to printer problems but we do have a promise that this does work. The CDUMP command, a character screen dump, should work on any printer however .

The MDUMP and MEDIT commands are useful for direct editing of the memory in much the same way as the sector editor edits a disc. MDUMP simply lists the memory are selected but MEDIT uses a full screen editor in both HEX and ASCII, editing being a simple process of positioning the cursor and typing over what ever is there, ESC gives you an escape route should things go devastatingly wrong.

Sometimes you may find that a certain subroutine is in the wrong place in a BASIC program but this can be overcome by using IMOVE command which allows the movement of program lines in the same way as a wordprocessor would move a paragraph of text. There is however a strange side effect of this process in that the lines keep their original line numbers and so a RENUM has to be performed or the program could be completely destroyed.

VARS lists all the variables that are used in a BASIC program, I found this invaluable for setting up extra routines which needed their own variables after I had forgotten which ones were already used, though I would have appreciated a way of compacting the variables to save memory. FNS does the same thing for defined functions but allows you to select the line number range.

The DUMP and TYPE commands are very similar to the BBC's DUMP and TYPE which allow the viewing of a disk or tape BASIC/BINARY file or ASCII file respectively without having to physically load the whole thing into memory first.

XROM will execute a command in a specified ROM, any parameters may be passed but there is no facility for returning values should there be any need.

Using PRINTON will make the printer echo any text sent to the screen and can be used in conjunction with any of the commands, quite useful for getting memory dumps etc, PRINTOFF turns off this facility.

The package is not designed to be removed once it has been installed but there should be not problems of it clashing with other programs as there is a provision for turning off both the RSX's using INORSX and to turn off specified ROMS so they act as if they are not there using IROMOFF, a, b, . . . , n. ROMON will switch on specified ROMS, though if UTOPIA has been switched out then you need to reset the machine. At £29.95 *Utopia* is very well priced and should be of good use to the serious programmer, 664 owners however should note that they will need to order a 'c1' connector as the cartridge will not fit the machine properly.

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TRY A SILICON DISK INSTEAD OF A SECOND DISK DRIVE

Taking a close look at a little gadget that fits into the expansion port

Ever wanted a second disk drive but cash just didn't allow you the luxury, well if you have a CPC6128 and £29.95 then how about a silicon disk instead? This neat 'little' gadget fits into the expansion port, having both a hole in it so that the printer lead can still be connected and a through bus so that many more extras can be connected.

The grey box contains a rom, logging itself on as rom 5 and as drive B (C on a two drive system), and allows the second bank of 64k to be used as a sort of ram disk, all the standard disk commands being supported. **I**SDISC initialises the system, though if the silicon disk has been set up one already then the data remains intact, even after a reset. If you wish to move the entire contents of a disk into the ram disk and vice versa then the **I**LOADDISC and **I**SAVEDISC commands will allow this. LOADDISC moves the contents of the disk to the ram but on the 64k version if the contents of the disk adds up to more than 62k then the machine will lock up and have to be switched off then on again (cold reset), though this should not happen on the 256k version as only 178k could be transferred at one time.

SAVING ENTIRE BANKS

The SAVEDISC command saves the entire banks contents to the disk, replacing anything that was on the disk, destroying it utterly as not even a directory editor will recover lost data. The unit allows the use of all the disk commands, including ERA, REN, LINE INPUT, WRITE etc but if you try to access the data on the silicon disk from machine code, using the standard extended jumpblock calls, then the machine will probably lock up or tell you that the second, or third, drive is missing though **DK** being the techno whizzkids they are, did I say kids, have thoughtfully included instructions on how to tackle this problem. CPM is fully supported, with commands included to loadboth CPM 2.2 and CPM Plus into memory with a patch program so that the silicon disk is used rather than main disk drive, it is still possible, however, to use the main drive by switching to drive A.

Whether or not the silicon disk will catch on is hard to say, it can be very useful as a development tool where you may not want to clutter up a disk with small modules of a program, and as such is quite adequate, but as a replacement for a second disk drive it does not compare very favorably except in terms of speed.

AN EASY WORD PROCESSING PACKAGE FOR THE NEWCOMER

DAVID PAUL puts Tasword under the microscope

Tasword by Leeds based **Tasman** software is one of the most popular word processing packages for the home computer market with versions available for the Spectrum, Commodore 64, MSX (remember them?), Einstein amd Amstrad CPC and PCW machines. *Amsword* is a version of *Tasword* published and marketed by **Amsoft**. The most powerful versions with extra features are those produced for the Amstrad computers.

Tasword is easy to use for the newcomer to word-processing, logical in operation, well documented and it has the added bonus of being easy to customise to your own requirements — the program actually helps you to do this.

Amstrad CPC versions have an optional 'add-on' facility, with the purchase of a further Tasman program, *Tasprint* you can change the output of your Amstrad or other Epson compatible dot matrix printer from within the word processing program itself to produce five additional fonts.

Tasprint, with its five print styles (fonts) is available on disk or cassette for the Amstrad CPC range. The recently published *Tasword 8000* for the PCW computers comes with a selection of font styles built-in.

Each print style:- Compacta, Data-Run, Lectura-Light, Median and Palace Script, is twice the normal character height and the characters themselves may vary in width from the usual dot-matrix output. This means that the software has to be set up (configured) for the printer you are using.

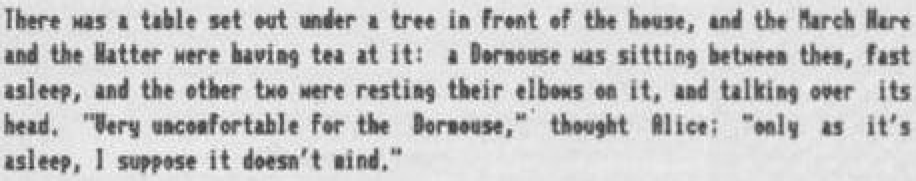
The *Tasprint* program has all the necessary routines to help in setting up, so it's really a matter of following the on-screen prompts. After loading *Tasprint* the first question the program will ask is 'What type of printer are you using?' and there follows a list of thirteen of the most popular printers. The list includes the Amstrad DMP 1 and any Epson compatible printer so, in fact, the list is quite comprehensive. If by chance you happen to have an unusual type of printer not included in the on-screen information, a quick telephone call to **Tasman Software** will meet with a very friendly response and should soon solve the problem.

If you are using a tape based system then each configured font can be saved individually on a separate tape to save time when installing into the word processing program. Disk users can simply save the configured *Tasprint* onto disk, either way the method is simply to follow the screen prompts.

Remembering that the *Tasprint* characters have different heights to the usual dot — matrix output, you may find your first efforts look rather strange with a gap appearing in the middle of each letter. If

▶

Tasword



There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. "Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse," thought Alice; "only as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind."

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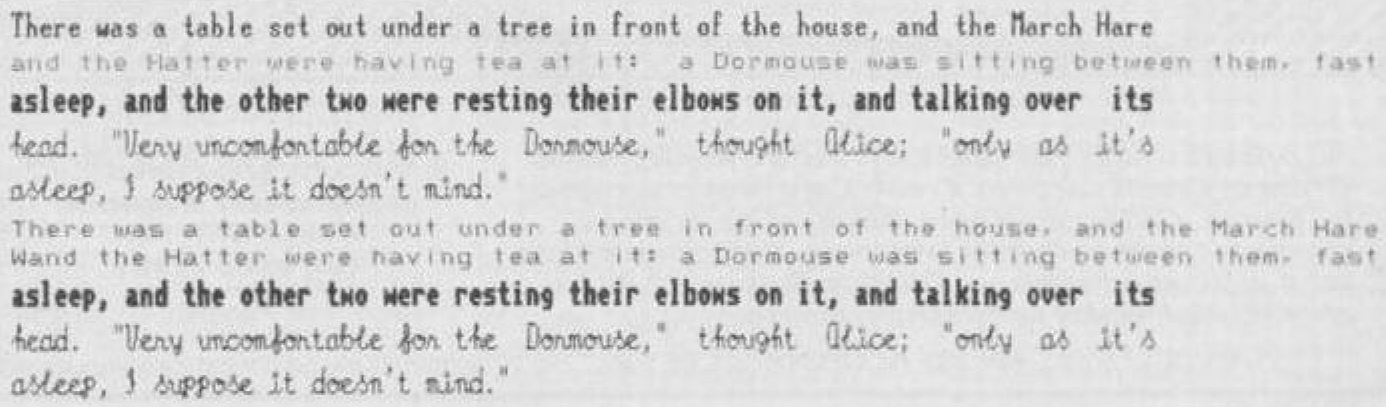

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this happens then the linefeed control of the main *Tasword* program will have to be adjusted. This is done by going to the main menu of *Tasword* and calling up the 'Customise Tasword' and then answering 'Y' to the query 'Do you want to change the page layout?'

You are then given the opportunity to alter the configuration of the main word-processing program by changing the default values of the printer control codes for carriage return, form feed and line feed. In most cases all that will be necessary will be to change the line feed setting from 10 to 0.

It is a good idea to save a customised version of Tasword with this line feed to use whenever you are going to be working with Tasprint fonts, a one disk taking up 68K and leaving 101K free is a convenient working arrangement.

Using the new fonts is straight forward after *Tasprint* has been installed at the appropriate places in your text using the normal *Tasword keys* will show the printer control characters, at the far right of the screen the five optional *Tasprint* control characters V-Z are now activated and will toggle the new fonts on and off.

Are the new fonts worth having? Lectura Light is a very clear style with letters neatly formed in both upper and lower case, descenders —the parts of the letters 'g' 'p' 'y' etc. that go below the line are easy to recognise as such. This font would be ideal for making notices or preparing educational workcards.

Median is smaller in size and has a very business-like look, as it is NLQ and is heavier than normal type it should photocopy well — an important consideration for business use.

Compacta, with its emphasised look is easy to read but has the look of a typewriter with a well worn ribbon — it could be used to stress parts of a document.

Data Run is the type of computer style writing that you see on your cheques. This can be used in upper case only, a large document printed in this style is confusing to the eye.

Palace Script is cursive style which is an obvious novelty, recipients of a letter written in this font will think you have an expensive daisy wheel typewriter that can do 'real joined up writing'. The descenders almost disappear spoiling the clarity of the text.

You must remember not to use *Tasword* printer control codes when a *Tasprint* font is switched on and that a different control to the usual inverse 'J' is used when underlining text. Printer output will be slower when *Tasprint* is in use.

Any *Amsword* or *Tasword* file can be printed using *Tasprint* and for many users this could be an improvement on the output of their dot matrix printer. A worthwhile extra for *Tasword* users who would like to add some variety to their work.

Tasprint is published by **Tasman Software** for the Amstrad CPC range costing £9.90 on cassette or £12.90 on disk.

CHEETAH LOUDLY ANNOUNCE THEIR NEW *DRUMKIT FOR THE AMSTRAD*

Drum sounds echo around the office as Anthony Clarke Boom beats a retreat on their latest utility

Bom bah bom bom, eh what, oh I don't have to write the review now do I, oh well back to the grind. After being torn away from AMDRUM by our now crumbling staff writer, yes 'crumbly' is catching, I think you should have already guessed what I think of it.

This system is fantastic, recreating the sounds of CLAPS, BASS DRUM, SNARE, MID TOM, LOW TOM, COWBELL, HIGHHAT open and closed, and all perfectly by using digitally recorded sounds instead of envelopes. *AMDRUM* comes in the form of a plug in box, with no through bus, that contains the HI-FI interface and, we suspect, a large bank of ram which contains the recorded sounds of each of the drums. To make the system expandible, the sounds must be loaded before any composing can be achived, after which it is possible to load 9 demo tracks ranging from PUNK to MARCH. One of the most advanced commands available is the SYCRO, which allows you to save a sequence of pulses to tape which can be played back into the machine to sycronise the drumkit to any other music you care to have on. The system comes with a full drum kit editor, so that you may compose your own sequences, though you do have to be a little careful, and of course have rhythm.

DRUM SOUNDS ON CHANNELS

The reason for the care is that certain drum sounds are played on certain channels, eg the MID TOM, LO TOM, and SNARE all play on the 2nd channel and so may not be played all at the same time, the software does check for this but if two of the drums follow each other that happen to work on the same channel then the last one is cut short. The PATTERN page allows rhythm patterns to be written using the PATTERN DISPLAY and the cursor, with five functions available for creating and editing a drum sequence. FILE selects a subpage of the PATTERN section which allows patterns to be stored or retrieved from the currently selected media (tape or disk). If you don't wish to use the fairly long winded method of entering the drum sounds onto bars then how about entering them in real time.

As the program keeps time and plays drum sounds that may have already been recorded, you may press the CTRL key to insert one of the drum sounds that you have already selected. This is very easy way to make up drum sequences as they usually turn out much better than trying to enter them using the cursor keys. The tempo can be changed at any stage, on a permanent basis, by using the TEMPO option or, if the drums are playing, by using the cursor up and down keys to increase or decrease the tempo, though this is only temporary. Typing D will play the track already layed down, space stops it. The SHIFT function, not to be confused with the SHIFT key, rotates the display pattern to the left to allow a new start point to be chosen. Anyone with no musical experience may find this bit a little confusing. When the pattern page is selected a pattern of two four-beat bars is displayed, with drum 6 (HIHAT CLOSED) inserted on each beat.

EQUAL GROUPS OF BEATS

Bars are equal groups of beats within each pattern. Patterns are displayed in bars to help writing in various time signatures. (This does not effect the actual sound.) The number of beats per bar (BEATS/BAR) may be altered from the TEMPO/FORMAT sub-page, which allows the beats per bar and number of bars to be changed. Three lines of the pattern can be edited at once, the centre white line being the current cursor position for editing at. If the cursor is moved up or down then the lines are scrolled so that the line you wish to edit is always in the centre of the screen, pressing a number from 1-8 will put the drum sound at the cursor, in the correct channel position, the program keeping tabs on the drum sounds that are valid at that position as already described.

The system comes with a BOOT program that allows you to transfer the drum file to disk as well as a function buiult into the main program to save that to disk as well. The major omission from these programs is that the actual drum sequences are not saved to the disk. It is possible to use a file transfer utility, after using which the files are totally compatible with the disk copy. Be warned this utility needs an amplifier, the internal speaker being much to wimpy for the drum sounds. A Latin and Electro kit also come with the package but as we only had the pre-production version these were not available. When you consider the price of the AMSTRAD range along with the amazingly low price of £34.95 for the *AMDRUM* system, it is easy to see that this system will sell well when compared to the £1000 plus for dedicated drumulators. It should sell in great numbers to new bands who can't afford a full drum kit. The system is not MIDI compatible but the SYNCRO facility more than makes up for this. All in all a great utility that will give musical AMSTER users a great opportunity to make themselves deaf!

TAPE AND DISK CPC 464/664/6128 UTILITIES
● A FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE AND UPDATE SERVICE
(always state which Amstrad you own)

TAPESPEED TWO (TS2)

Converts your slow loading software, (including MANY clicky/jerky leaders) to a max of 3600 baud. Cost £6.99.
● AMAZING! — now converts many of the 'CLICKY' leader programs. Some will now run on 664/6128 for FIRST time!
● Fully automatic. It loads in continuously up to 44K.
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DISK MANAGER ONE

For 464, 664 and 6128 owners — essential to help you manage your AMSTRAD drive. No risk — very useful and only £5.99!
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LERM, DEPTTX, 11 BEACONSFIELD CLOSE, WHITLEY BAY, TYNE & WEAR

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH A COMBINED ASSEMBLER, DISASSEMBLER AND MONITOR

ADAM is an assembler, disassembler and monitor,hence the name, for the full range of Amstrad computers. Unlike many similar systems the three modules are resident in memory at once and can be located at any memory location from 1000 to 28000. Unlike *Devpac* the program does not wait for you to enter the loading address but instead the loader checks if the space bar is being press, if it is not the program is loaded at &4000 hex, though there are instructions on loading the program from a BASIC program if you require one to be in memory at the same time.

After the faultless load *ADAM* starts in the monitor and waits not for any of the one letter commands that are usually followed but for a single digit which specifies a particular option.

The monitor can disassemble code to the printer as well as the screen by selecting the CTRL P option or just pressing CLR which toggles between printer on and off. The monitor can work in two number bases, hex and decimal, and can even dissasemble any of the 240 possible sideways roms, a strange but useful addition. The program also features a trace facility which unlike many similar programs is not put off by the EXX command which swaps between the normal and alternative set of registers, AF BC HL & AF' BC' HL' etc. This means that it is possible to trace through the firmware without fear of crashing the system. The K command can be used to examine a specific memory address, the result gives an ASCII listing of the memory which it terminated by CTRL-C. BIT 7 of the value of the address is masked off so that they may be read properly, ie an RSX table will be fully readable and not have each termination character shown as a slash or some other character.

The Q command allows the modification of a memory location while the W command will put put a word (2 bytes) into the given memory address and address (similar to typing POKE x,val1 and POKE x,val2) the two halves of the value being put into the memory addresses in reverse order. This is well known to many programmers but may be a little confusing for someone just learning about machine code.

D will allow you to disassemble a block of code, if D is followed by an address then disassembly starts from that address, but also it is possible to specify a label to start from if a source file has already been entered into memory and assembled. If the printer option is selected then you are asked for an end address so that the program does not carry on forever, the Q key or CTRL C will halt the operation, pressing any other key will continue the disassembly an instruction at a time.

H allows you to disassemble memory into a tokenised text file for use by the assembler editor, labels are even included in the text file. Usually machine code is full of data tables which cannot be executed so the H command allows you to enter locations of these data elements, each of these data bytes is placed in a DEFB instruction. The labels are not just generated as LABEL1 LABEL2 . . . LABELn but instead go some way to giving you an idea of what is going on. A label beginning with R represents an address at which a branch terminates and any label referencing a call or jump generates a label beginning with W, if several branches terminate at one address than the label is given a line of it's own.

A very useful inclusion to the editor is the '.' command which allows the modification of a specific register pair, including the alternate register set for example: .BC,2 loads BC with 2, ..BC,2 loads B with 2; . . . BC,2 loads C with 2; .BC',ABCD loads the alternative register BC' with ABCD.

The O command allows the evaluation of a given expression, such as 103*172 2d, and even allows the evaluation of an expression at a given label. The output will depend on whether HEX or DECIMAL mode is selected.

The T command allows the user to single step trace through a program starting with the address held in the current program counter. The contents of all the registers, including the alternative set, and the first 16 bytes of the program counter are displayed at all times. Each instruction is disassembled, executed and then the register display modified to show at all times what is going on. There is no danger of *ADAM* being corrupted at the program also checks for any instructions that might endanger the execution of *ADAM*, any attempt to do this will result in '12 BAD LOCATION' error being generated.

If you wish to quick trace the routine the R command will do this and although the register display is not updated the program commands are still executed. If in quick trace mode the stack pointer (SP) has a value equal to its initial value plus 2, after a RET or POP etc, then the monitor returns to single step mode.

The J command allows you to execute a routine from a specified address, if no address is supplied then the program assumes the address given by the last ENT £ command executed in the source code, while j£ will execute the routine at the memory location stored in the program counter.

The assembler is of the two pass, full screen editor type and does not need to use line numbers. Labels are entered staring at column 1 while any mnemonics are entered from line 2 onward, this means that any instruction line that does not contain a label must be proceeded by a space character. Labels can be in upper or lower case and be up to 8 characters long, the ability to enter lower case letters means that labels such as start and START are treated as different, op codes on the other hand are converted to upper case when ENTER is pressed at the end of each line. The operands can be no more than 26 characters long so any expressions that you wish to include must have a length less than this.

The source file is assembled with the A, the code is generated in the second pass while the first pass generates the symbol table. If *ADAM* detects and overflow of the symbol table then it is copied in to screen memory before assembly continues and is destroyed afterwards, though it is possible to force *ADAM* to use the screen memory. The A command can have an optional parameter which specifies 1) if the screen memory is to be used for the symbol table 2) if the code is to be generated at the ORG address specified in the text file or 3) if both the previous options are to be executed. The object code can be placed after the symbol table but not if the symbol table is to be put to the screen or at HMEM which is the lowest location that the code can be safely put, this allows the writing of code that is assembled in once location for use in another that may not be accessible at the time of composition.

Sometimes it is not possible to hold all of a source file on memory so the *F command can be included in the text so that files are linked together and assembled into memory.

The assembler includes a full selection of PSEUDO-OPCODES and assembler directives that allow the entry of data tables etc in the code. ORG address, defines the start address at which the machine code will be located while ENT £ OR ENT address gives the address that the code will be executed in conjunction with the J command.

EQU allows to definition of a value that is assigned to a label, ie SCREEN:EQU C000 defines the label SCREEN as being the start of the screen memory. DEFB allows a list or table of bytes to be entered one after the other while DEFW works in the same way but for words, two bytes at a time. DEFS reserves a block of memory and optionally fills it with with a given value, and DEFM allows the entry of an ASCII string expression. IF expression . . . (ELSE) . . . END, allows conditional assembly of a sections of code. If the expression is true then the source code following expression is assembled but if it is false then the code following the optional ELSE parameter is assembled, assembly returning to normal after the END command.

The source file can not be edited by over typing the offending line but instead the line must be edited in much the same way as the Amstrads' own line editor, typing DEL at the cursor at the start of a line will delete the whole line. If you wish to go straight into editing a certain section of code then you call follow the L command, which puts you in edit mode, by a label which means you start with the

on which the label can be found.

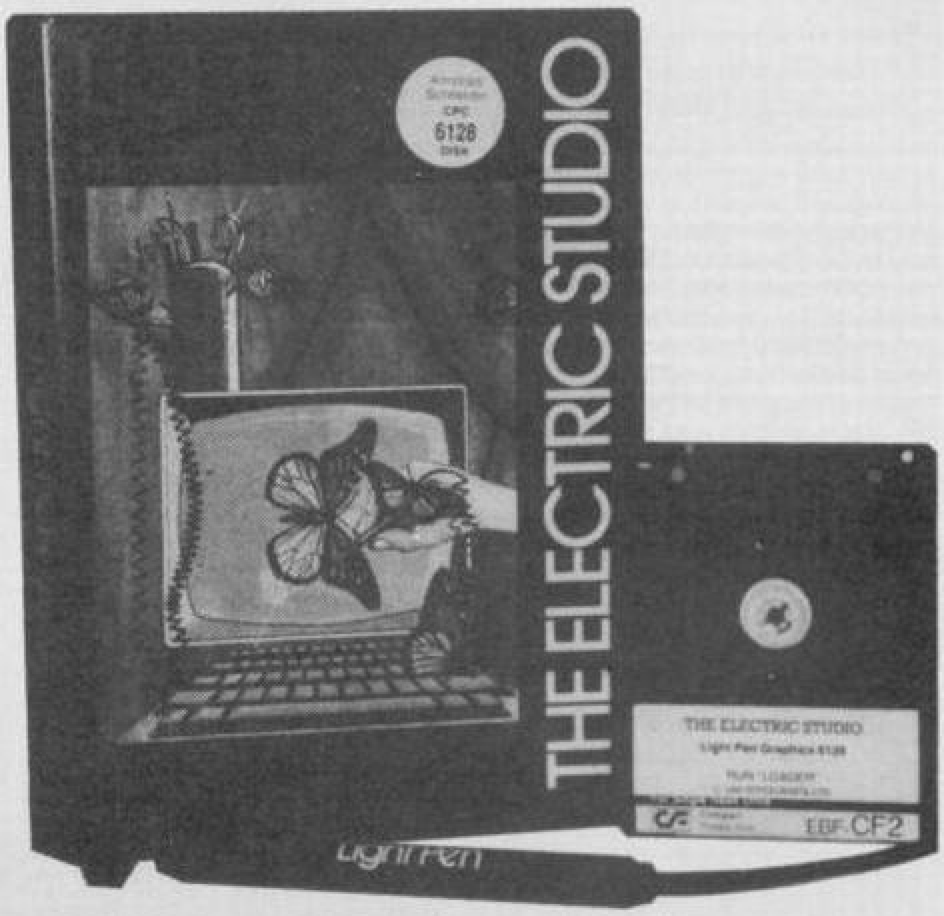
The P and G commands put and get the textfile to or from tape/disk respectively, the put command saves the tokenised text file so it cannot be loaded into another assembler but the manual does give instructions on how to convert text files from other assemblers into a form that may be used in *ADAM*.

A specific string may be searched for and optionally replaced and sections of code can be marked and copied from one section to another in much the same way as a word processor may do it, while CTRL K will kill any markers that you may have set up previously and so stop any accidents.

The manual is not very large at only 13 pages and 4 appendices, and assumes a working knowledge of Z80 machine language, but it is still very clear and precise and includes a section to take a newcomer through the use of package step by step.

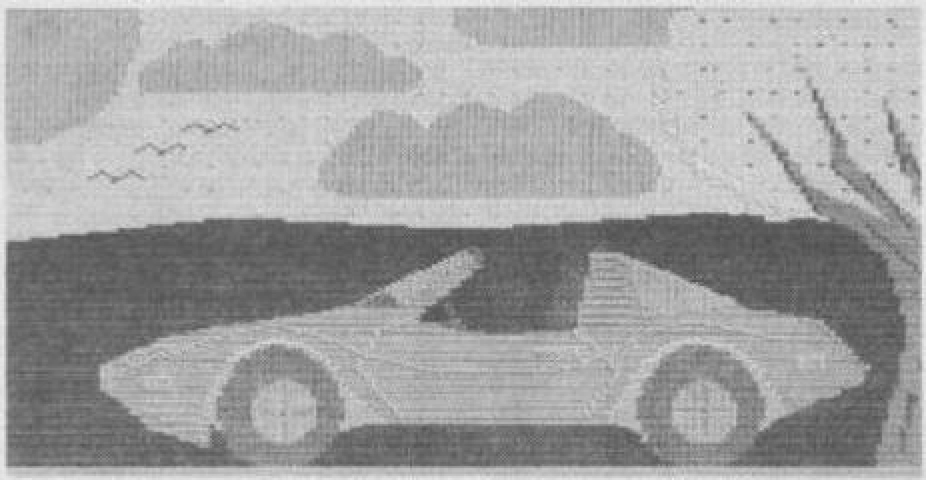
Overall *ADAM is a competent utility that would be simple enough for the beginner to use as they learn and includes some advanced features for more competent programmers.*

A LIGHTPEN FOR THE SERIOUS SOFTWARE USER



Although the Mark II Light Pen from the **Electric Studio** has been around for some time, we have only just got our hands on one and thought it only fair to give the CPC6128 version an airing.

The pen comes loosely wrapped around a disk inside the usual A5 box. The first thing you notice about the pen is that there is no through **BUS** so that other extras can be added, which means that the light pen must be connected last. With two and a half feet of cable you have plenty of manoeuvrability though it does at times get in the way. The light pen itself looks like a vandalised Berol pen that has had its top cut off and innards removed to allow a light sensitive detector to be inserted, while a 50 way edge connector plugs straight into the expansion socket without the need for a separate interface.



The graphics software included is quite complete, including fill, elastic banding etc, but the calibration part of the program seems to have been completely deleted so making the whole program totally unusable. Having said that, the real aim of this system is serious software, selecting something from a menu etc, although the inclusion of the software gives the user something to play with until a more serious use can be found for it.

EXTRAS ON 6128 PEN

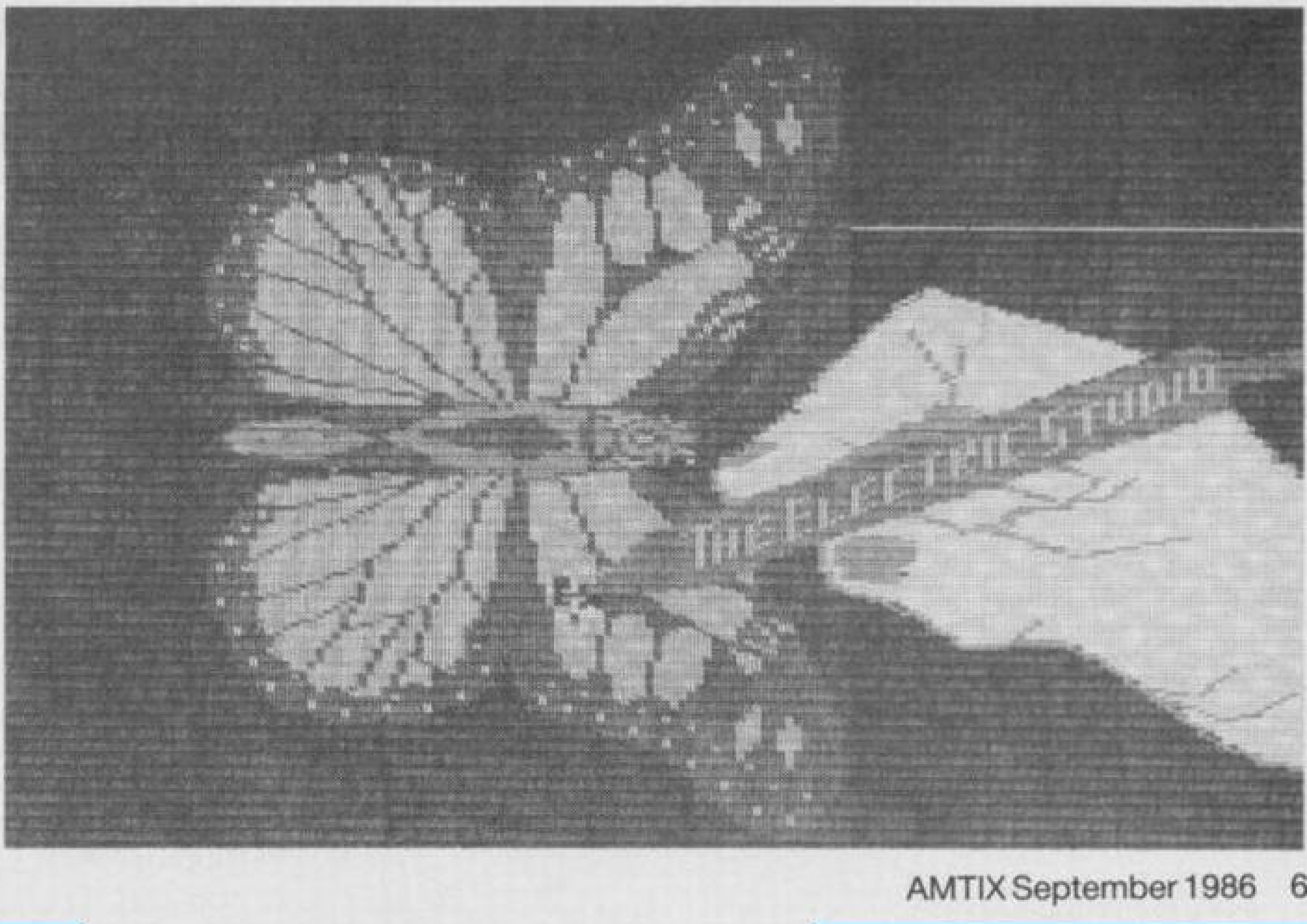
We have already looked at the software in a previous issue but there are some extras on the 6128 version that should be touched upon. The main one is the ability to save screens to the extra memory, once this option is selected a key between 3 and 5 is pressed to chose the bank of memory into which the screen goes. Useful if you're about to do something drastic to the screen that may ruin it. The second change is the sprite,icon and zoom options have been included in the main program. The define sprite option fills the screen with a grid so that a sprite may be defined, though only in one colour. Once the sprite has been finished the program puts the picture that is currently being used back on screen and then allows you to move the sprite around the screen until the space bar is pressed, at which point the sprite is printed and you may then move a copy of the sprite to another position to be printed again.

QUITTING THE OPTION

The ENTER/RETURN key quits the option. Zoom magnifies a block of 20*25, 40*25, 80*25 pixels and allows direct editing of the area, after which the data is put back where it came from with the changes made. COPY saves the current screen prior to any further operations if you need to keep your basic screen intact, while DEL will restore a screen to its original form, if you return to menu, however, this option is no longer available. Being able to store and recall screens is all very well but what about merging them, well this is also possible using the layering function which allows screens that have been saved to the extra banks of memory to be placed over each other using any of the logical functions AND OR or XOR. A sort of masking for the screens would have be more useful.

At £25.95 this version of the light pen seems a little like an expensive toy, as anyone who needs a good light pen would buy the professional version which is pixel accurate, not byte accurate as this one is, so I see little use for it in any area except the serious software side.

Anthony Clarke



SO YOU WANNA BE A ROCK 'N' ROLL STAR

Then read no further as JON BATES explains the joys of the Miditrack Performer brought to you courtesy of those bright boys at Electromusic Research.

electromusic research
AMSTRAD
MIDITRACK PERFORMER
POLYPHONIC DIGITAL MULTITRACK RECORDER PROGRAM FOR REALTIME CONTROL OF
MIDI INSTRUMENTS

Most musical keyboards that you buy to twiddle around with nowadays come equipped with a MIDI interface. This means (loosely) that you can link it up with another MIDI fitted instrument, or you can interrogate and command it via a suitable interface from your Amstrad. Et Voila one suitable interface which comes complete with operating software and turns your Amstrad into a very powerful music processor. Linked via cables to a Midi compatible synthesizer or keyboard it offers the user a staggering array of possibilities and the results can be stunning.

The *Performer* is what is known as a real-time sequencer: that is to say it will record your every note faithfully and allow you to 'over-dub' up to eight times, the result being, we hope, a magnificent musical achievement. Let me explain. An eight-track tape recorder is capable of recording eight instruments on separate channels simultaneously or one by one, known in the recording world as multi-tracking. What the *Performer* does is to simulate an eight-track digital recorder for approximately one tenth of the price of the real macoy. It records exactly what you play on your keyboard as you play it. As there are eight tracks to record on, this gives the most ambitious of us plenty of room to develop our talents. On loading up the program it gives you the screen display with the status of the tracks. Recording is simple; move the cursor to the track you want, enter 'R' and answer the simple question to confirm that this is indeed your intention and play away.

The program allows you to play as many notes as you wish including chords for each track — in other words each track can be polyphonic. The only limitation is the number of notes your keyboard is capable of playing simultaneously. To keep things in some semblance of order there is a count-in (user one and leaving lots of space free for more dabbling. The *Performer* has excellent easy-to-follow documentation and three demo tunes, one of which shows you how to build up a piece track by track. The aforementioned are in both data and audio form. For the professional rock star the program gives you many options to manipulate each track. You can repeat sections, define the number of beats per bar, start recording on any track at any given beat, change the pitch of the track and if you have more than one midi instrument you can tell each track which keyboard it is going to play (Midi instruments can receive on 16 separate channels — these are defined on-screen).

CLOCK START/STOP
MIDI IN
MIDI OUT 1
MIDI OUT 2
IN
OUT
DATA
electromusic research
AMSTRAD
MIDI

The capacity of the program is dependent on how much information you give it. If you give it lots of touch sensitivity information (this means that you have a touch sensitive keyboard!) then the memory space is used up significantly quicker but given a modest synth or two and an average tune then lengths of up to fifteen minutes should be possible.

The *Performer* is a well packaged and documented unit. The actual hardware is in two small and tough plastic cases connected by a short ribbon cable. One plugs into the Amstrad port and the other has four five-pin DIN sockets to connect it to Midi compatible instruments. The sockets are: Midi in, Two Midi outs and Clock start/stop. The latter named socket is for non-midi devices such as drum machines or pre-digital synths that are capable of accepting the pre-midi standard of 24 clock pulses per second to synchronize them. A nice feature is that the unit has LED's to indicate the data transmitting status in/out; so if there is a foul-up in the system you have at least some chance of tracking the fault.

In conclusion the **Electromusic Research** system is very easy to use and relates very nicely to the way in which a tape recorder works. It does, of course, rely on you, oh talented reader, to play the darn thing correctly as once the bum note is entered there is no alternative but to redo the whole track. There is no display of the music that you have played. If there was it would probably take up most of the memory and so render the program pretty useless anyway. The program was tried out on a variety of synths; to whit, Yamaha DX21 and Korg poly 800 Mark 2, the acid test was tried using with what I should think to be the most modest of set-ups. I used the Casio CZ101 which costs about £275. EMR have five other programs using the same interface which at this time are being dished up for your consumption.

Thanks to **Musicmakers** of Selly Oak, Birmingham for supplying the synths for this review.

PROTEXT UNVEIL A WORD PROCESSOR FOR THE CPC RANGE

With the launch of their ROM based package Arnor have a winner. WILLIAM JONES investigates

Arnor has launched what has already become regarded as one of the most powerful and flexible word processors for the Amstrad CPC range of machines. Its advantage isn't just that it is ROM based, and therefore very fast, but also that it was endowed with a many features and facilities which would have substantially improved some 'Professional' word processors.

There can be little doubt that *Protext* on a 6128 would satisfy the requirements of many 'serious' WP users in all but one respect — mail merging. The value and application of mail merge programs has been discussed at some length in an earlier issue. For instance it could be used if a happy couple wants to write to relatives thanking them for the super presents. The

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bulk of the letter can be left unchanged for each letter, only the name, address and description of the gift need be altered.

This 'boilerplate' technique can speed up repetitive correspondence significantly, but you still have to enter quite a bit of text for every letter and then wait for the letter to be printed out. Far better if you could leave the computer to get on with the task, the chances are that far fewer errors would be made and the newly weds could get on with something else! This is what *Promerge* is all about — provide it with the skeleton letter and a file with the data, and in no time at all you will have a pile of letters oozing with gratitude to a host of distant relatives.

Although *Promerge* is supplied as a separate program it is integrated into *Protext* on loading. Once loaded the only way you can tell it is there, apart from using it, is by giving the command **VER**, whereupon the machine responds with the version number of *Protext* and *Promerge*.

The facilities of *Promerge* are accessed via 'stored' commands which are explained in detail in your *Protext* documentation. A stored command is written into the text file you are processing and must always begin with a > (greater than symbol) placed in the left most column of the document. Those of you familiar with *Wordstar* or *NewWord* will be reminded of the 'dot' commands used by these systems.

THE MAIL MERGE COMMANDS

The **IN** command can be placed within a text file and is used to force the program to read in another text file (perhaps just a paragraph) and place it within the current text file. If you wanted to print a series of files in succession then the **IN** command will do the job.

The hard work of mail merging is done by the computer reading data, commonly names and addresses, from a data file, or files, and inserting text into the standard letter. Before the mail merge can begin the program has to be told the name of the file to get the data from, *Promerge* uses the **DF** command, followed by the name of the files or files.

There are a number of ways of getting data into a text file. Most frequently the computer will read each set of data from the file and insert it into the text, print the document then start over again. At the top of the document you will need the command **RV**, read variable, followed by the names you assign to the variables to be read from the file. If you like a simple life you might opt to call the variables 'Name, add1, add2, add3, add4, postcode' — this will force *Promerge* to read 5 data elements from the data file — with luck and a following wind it will come back with a name, 4 address lines and a post code. Of course the data file can contain just about anything you want, not just names and addresses but perhaps payment and supply details for invoice generation, the data for which might be prepared by a database or accounts system. Just so long as you tell *Promerge* what you want it to read, and where to put it when it has read it, it will be content.

Promerge has a rather clever routine which allows it to manipulate and alter data it has acquired from a file before it places it within the text. The **SV** Set Variable command assigns a variable to a names within the text file, rather than simply reading it in from a data file. This command is valuable because *Promerge* can manipulate text in a similar manner to basic, a process known as string slicing. An example. Perhaps you store the name of a person in your data file as 'Mr John F. Kennedy'. That would look fine at the top of the address but rather silly as 'Dear Mr John F Kennedy'. Normally the only way to get round this problem is by storing the name twice, once in full and again as 'John', or as 'Mr Kennedy' - depends how well you knew the man. By using *Promerge*'s string slicing commands you can get round this problem by chopping the full version up to suit. The tools at your disposal act on words or phrases. **A:B**

, A:

, A

let you select the characters from within a word, from into the variable 'name2' by taking the variable 'name1' (equal to Mr John F Kennedy) with the command **SV** name2, name1, w1

w4

VARIABLES INTO TEXT

The third way of getting variables into a text file is by using the command **AV** (ask for variable). When *Promerge* encounters this command it stops and prompts the operator for the data. This function is great for making sure that you always set the correct date in your letters, unless of course you type the wrong one in when you are asked for it. With a bit of cunning you can use the **AV** to build up a data file by setting up a document which prompts for the data and then writes it into a different file. This can be quite an effective means of accumulating the mailing list especially if you haven't got a database program.

Promerge also supports the more mundane of mail merge commands, in particular the conditional commands **IF** (if condition is true then do such and such) and **EL** for ELSE do something different. A conditional can test not only for simple equality but all ranges of inequalities as well, not just for whole words but for substrings (parts of words). The conditional commands let you use your mailing list without having to edit it, the conditional commands can be used instead to filter out the addressees you don't want.

Promerge has a number of valuable commands which can be embedded within the text file; **FP** for switching on/off formatting while printing, **MC** turn microspacing on/off (and **CW** for none Epsom compatible printers), **DM** displays a message on the screen while printing — and a good many more.

EXTENSIONS TO PROTEXT

Promerge endows *Protext* with more powerful printing facilities. **P, PS, PF** can now all be used from within a file. **PS** is particularly valuable since it allows you to print a file to the screen to see how it will turn out but if you spot a problem and press escape you will be returned to the text file proper with the cursor located in the spot where you hit escape during viewing.

New commands include **TW** which puts you in direct contact with the printer to allow direct typing, useful for the odd envelope. **PT** can be used within a basic program for setting up *Protext* to your personal taste before it loads. Use this command in a number of different programs and you can have different versions of *Protext* ready to perform a variety of tasks.

In conclusion I have no doubt at all that *Promerge* will perform the task for which it is intended. Mail merge programs are rather like programming languages — not quite as elegant or as extensive as basic — but writing a mail merge application is programming none the less. *Promerge* has everything you need. If you already have *Protext* and need this sort of facility you won't be disappointed. If you don't have a wordprocessor yet then *Promerge* gives you an even better reason to invest in *Protext*.

LETTERTECH

This month our new technical editor, Anthony Clarke, casts an expert eye over some of the technical letters received at AMTIX! Towers, and answers the various queries contained in them. If you would like to contribute thoughts relating to the AMTECH section whether it be comments on articles already published, or thoughts on products available, or if you have any problems using any hardware or software write now to AMTECH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

WHICH IS THE BEST?

Dear Sir
I have recently become an Amstrad CPC6128 owner and have started to read your excellent magazine. I work with computers and have been a home computer enthusiast for some time now. I am interested in the more serious use of computers and therefore ask you to recommend the best Word Processor, Assembler/Disassembler/Monitor and Disk Utility programs to obtain.

R T Preece, Birmingham B32 2HB.

Tasword 6128 should be adequate for your needs but if you can spare the money then Pocket Wordstar is a better bet. Pyradev for £29.95 is one of the best Assembler Monitor packages available as it uses the 2nd 64K of memory for the source files and object code, so much larger programs can be written. The Laser Genius suite of programs has the added advantage of having a semi compiled language of its own which can make machine code programming a much easier affair. Both Pride Utilities and Siren Software produce disk utilities of a similar nature, and should cope with any disk problems you may have.

WILL THIS DAMAGE MY TV SCREEN?

Dear Sirs
I have got a 464 modulator and colour telly and was thinking of buying a light pen until someone told me that it damaged your TV screen. Is this true? Also how much are disk drives?

Justin Mason, 2A Princes Way, Shanklin, Isle of Wight.

A light pen will not internally damage your TV but scratching the screen may be a danger though if you are careful then there should be no problem. The disc drive with DOS costs £159 and £99 without, and is available directly from AMSTRAD although bargains can be found by shopping around. Remember that you need the Disc interface (DOS) if this is your first drive.

BOULDERDASH REVISITED?

Dear Sir
After many patient hours I finally completed *Boulderdash* level 5

LETTERTECH

screens A to P. I expected a grand finale, a message of congratulations or even just a screen advertising a follow up game to buy. Some hope! All that happens is that you are returned to screen A with however many extra lives you have earned. One other small criticism as well. No matter how fast you are or how high your score you can never earn more than nine lives, but if you get killed you lose one of them straight away.

I am not one of your computer whiz kids, in fact my 17 year old son thinks I am mad to become obsessed by this 'Stupid Game', his words not mine, but I have now got to the stage where I can complete the game in approximately three quarters of an hour, I have ruined three joysticks and now have to rely on the keyboard.

Finally do you know of any follow up to this game? Or any similar game.

A Roberts, Hollinswood Estate, Telford TF3 2DX.
Boulderdash 3 is available from some software distributors but is not yet on general release.

EATING SOME CASSETTE PIE

Dear Sir
As an 'addendum' to my article on cassette problems (May issue), I now find I have to eat a few (but not all) of my words regarding degaussers. I have just been confronted in my local Boots by a head degausser built into a cassette case, on sale for the princely sum of £9.95! The beast consists of a small oscillator circuit powered by a tiny watch-type battery and the instructions recommend that you de-magnetise the head 'after every 30 hours of use'.

Despite this, I remain unconvinced of a need for such a device but felt that I should point out its existence should any readers be adamant that de-magnetisation is the only straw left for them to clutch at as a solution to their problem(s).

Another, rather more interesting, development is that of my own dear CPC 464 (upon which I am now typing this missive) to exhibit readerroritis! A distinct 'wobble' or a wowing if you read the article was audible when loading, more noticeable on the header lead-in as this is a single clear note. After checking for bent capstan, misshapen pinch-wheel, stiff pinch-wheel etc, I have since been informed by an engineer at a firm that repairs Amstrads that this is a common fault on ageing 464's.

My 464 is, inevitably, no longer under guarantee so I sloped along to the very helpful (up to now anyway) people at the local Focus shop, from whom I purchased my 464 last year, to see if they could order a motor for me to fit myself. The order has been duly despatched so I wait with trepidation in the hopes that my original motor holds out until its replacement arrives.

If and when the motor appears, I will send you the next episode of the saga so that if any other readers have the same problem and fancy their chances at a DIY repair, they will be able to see what's involved before they tackle the job.

Jim Ollerhead, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 3NF.
Thanks for another interesting letter.

ROUTINES WANTED

Dear Amtech
Like many other Amstrad, owners I have purchased a tape-to-disk transfer program to take full advantage of the 'modern' facility of a disk drive. It seems, however, that software houses, probably in an effort to avoid piracy, are incorporating routines in their programs which prevent a transferred program running from disk.

I have *Discovery* and have transferred the games to disk but two of these - *Emerald Isle* and *Dun Darach* do not run. *Emerald Isle* prints the title screen and instruction screen then reverts the Amstrad back to Basic. *Dun Darach* simply leaves you staring at the title screen.

Do you know any routines which will enable these transferred programs to run, from disk?

J Convery, Edinburgh EH3 5LC.
***Dun Darach* uses the enter foreground program call which will make the machine revert to being tape based so you must first look through the loader program to find the address that the loader is called at and call it directly. *Emerald Isle* is much more tricky, your best bet is to buy the Tie information sheets from Pride Utilities which should give you the relevant information.**

PROBLEMS WITH BRUCE LEE

Dear Amtech
I am afraid that I am having trouble with *Bruce Lee* (U S Gold). You see once I have killed the Wizard and inherited his treasure three times (with an approximate score of 185,000) the screen goes all blue and the word 'Ready' slowly appears on the screen. It is like when I am switching the computer on and it slowly warms up. What is wrong? Is it my copy? Did U S Gold run out of memory? I must confess, though, that it has only happened twice and since the second time I have not played it. Please, please help.

W Harrigan, Bexley Heath, Dent DA7 6PE.
Sounds like a loading problem to me. Try taking back your tape and insist on a replacement.

POWER ADAPTOR NEEDED

Dear Sir
Having considered what is currently available on the market, I have decided that an Amstrad CPC 6128 is probably the best computer for my needs. However, there is a problem. I already own a colour monitor/TV and would like to use its RGB input with my computer; obviously I don't want to waste £100 unnecessarily in trying the colour version when the green screen would do just as well. Can I connect the computer to my monitor, and if so, how?
B J Simpson, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6NE.
If you wish to use your own monitor you will have to build or buy a power adaptor to supply both 5 and 12 volts to your computer and disk drive, we have yet to here of one available on the market.

AMSTRAD IN STEREO

Dear Amtech
I am writing in order to establish whether it is possible to send sound from my CPC 464 through my stereo system's speakers using the Amstrad I/O port.

If this is possible how is it done? By simply using a cassette lead I can send sound from the TV through the speakers but this does not work on the Amstrad. What do I have to do?

D Ramdenee, East Tilbury, Essex.
The Amstrads I/O port sends out an un amplified signal that should be connected to a stereo by the tape in socket (the one on the stereo not the AMSTRAD), see appendix 5, page 3, of your manual.

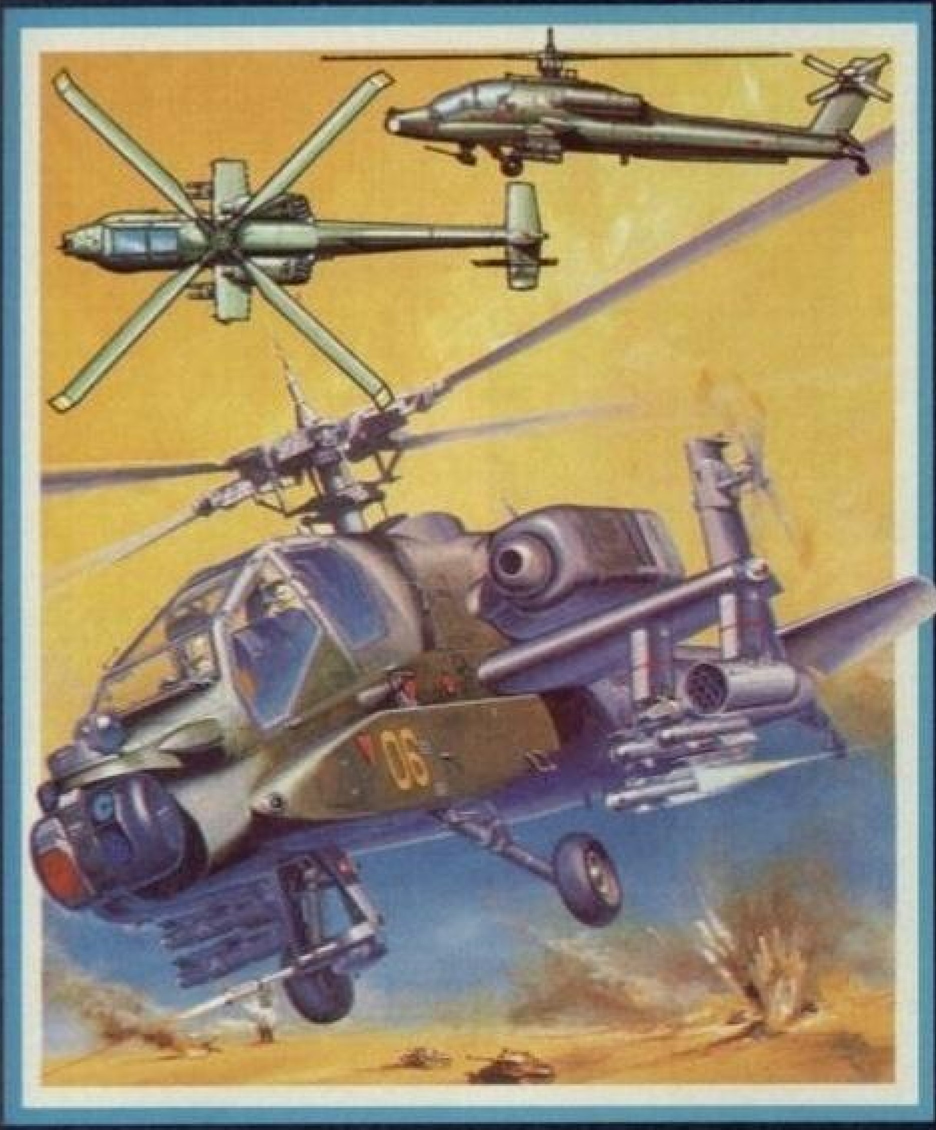
LOGO HELP REQUIRED

Dear Amtech
After reading the LOGO article in AMTECH in the June issue I loaded LOGO 3 and entered both programs. The first worked however there is an error in the 'TO HOUSE' procedure. The fifth line of the procedure does not have a number to divide ':side' by so ':side' is divided by 'PU', a command, which results in an error. After trying several numbers I have still to find a number to give a satisfactory result. I have also come across a command which is stated in the manual along with a small demo, but is not in the computer's character buffer when examined with 'contents'. The command concerned is the FILL command. How can I get a version of LOGO 3 with the missing command? Is there a book or books available about CP/M plus, AMSDOS, and LOGO 3 as the manual supplied is not very helpful.

Will the Vortex memory board ever be released for the 6128 will it be IBM as I have read and is the RAM disk, it has, compatible with CP/M 2.2 and CP/M plus. Can the 6128's implementation of CP/M plus support 16 disk drives that other versions can, if so can AMSDOS?

Finally a couple of programming problems. The first seems to be a bug in the 6128'S ERROR TRAPPING ROUTINES. The problem occurs when either erasing or loading a file or saving a file onto a disk with its copy-protection tabs closed. The first time any of the above is carried out the error is detected and my error routine is called. However the second time it happens the computer returns with the ready prompt. Is there a cure for this apparent bug in the operating system. The second problem is about the 'Retry, Ignore or Cancel?' that occurs when there is a disk missing from the drive or when saving to a disc when it is not allowable, is there a way of by-passing this question so my own error routine can take over? The reason I ask is because while accessing the disc I set the pen to the same as the paper colour to preserve the display when an error occurs.

Jonathan Shaw, Cornwall PL14 3NR.
Ok it's a fair cop. The To House procedure is more bugged than you think, the number you talk about is a 2, but this will not help as some of the lines are missing anyway. We will try to rectify this in a later issue as we seem to have lost David Paul's listing. The FILL command was never implemented on the version 3 logo due to a major bug, unfortunately the manuals had already been printed so it was too late to change them. If you do want more information on the use of LOGO then contact the BRITISH branch of *Digital Research*, who should be able to supply you with a manual. All the information I could get on the boards produced by Screens **is that they 'are coming', but they will not support 16 disk drives (how can you afford them) as the disk controller is only capable of using two drives. To get around your disk problem you need to switch off the error messages, which is not to tricky but I have no space to print the listing. Phone Amsoft on 0277 230222, ask for Cliff Lawson, and ask him for a sheet on disabling the said messages. You have, by the way, won our** Wally Of The Week **award for your solution of making the paper and ink colours the same as the screen will still corrupt.**



ONLY THE BRAVEST FLY ...

TOMAHAWK

AMSTRAD

464, 664, 6128,
COLOUR OR GREEN SCREEN

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You have the weapons, the machine ... climb in and prepare for take off!

BY D.K. MARSHALL
ADAPTED BY DARRELL D.
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- **Spectacular 3D cockpit view with over 7000 ground features**
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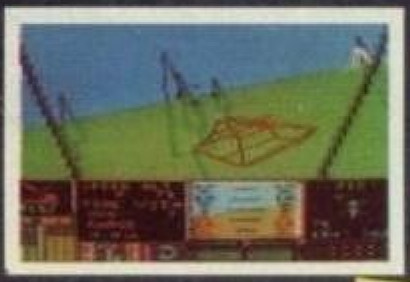
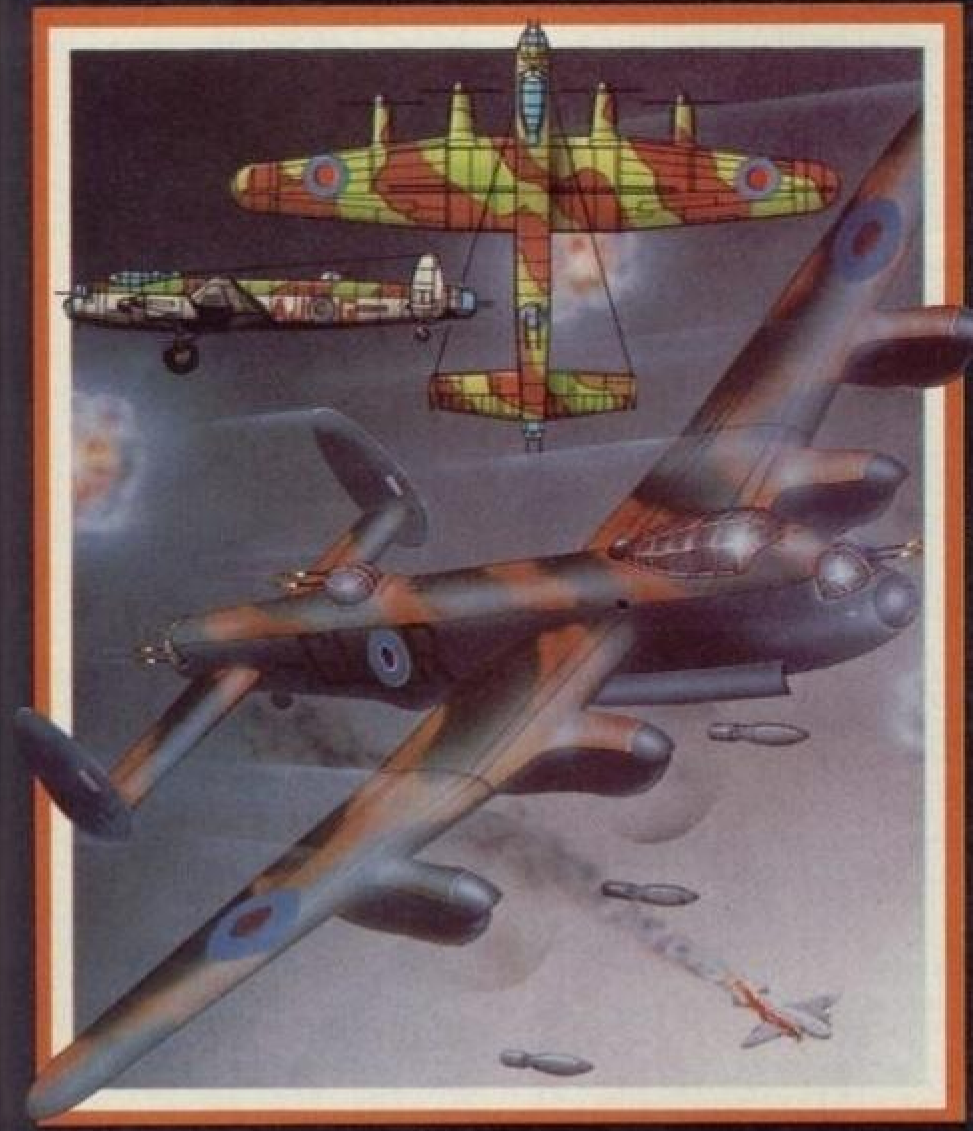


Also available on Spectru



ONLY ACES SURVIVE IN ...

NIGHT GUNNER

AMSTRAD

464, 664, 6128,
COLOUR OR GREEN SCREEN

NIGHT GUNNER – The amazing air battle scenario that stretches you to the very limit – guns blazing, enemy fighters attack from all directions – 3D ground attack sorties and there's still the flight back home.

BY R.J. SWIFT
ADAPTED BY TIM MOORE
Cassette 7.95 Disk 13.95

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- **30 ground attack missions**
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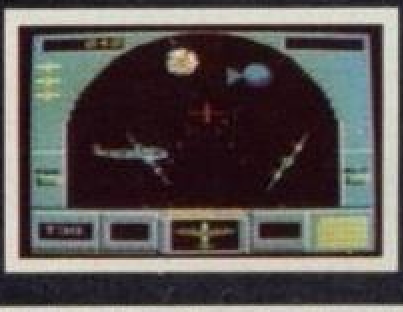
- **1 or 2 players each with 4 levels of difficulty**
- **High score table with medals**
- **Self demonstrating title page**



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AM-TIPS

Julian Rignall

Hello there tip pickers everywhere. Last month I moaned about Mr Sun being too hot and now look what's happened! He's gone away leaving Mr Rain to pour his heart out and the weather's turned so cold that crumbly persons, such as our humble old editor, Malcolm, have had to shake the mothballs out of their thermal undies. Never mind . . . perhaps this tips section may brighten your day!

It's a bit of a maps bonanza this month, *Fairlight*, *Saboteur* and *Movie* abound within these pages and there are some jolly useful 'little but jolly useful' bits too. The winner of this month's £20 worth of software will be announced later — first you can feast your eyes on these gems . . .

FAIRLIGHT
The Edge

If you turn a couple of pages you'll see a very nice *Fairlight* map — use it in conjunction with the following tips. Cheers to **Paul Whittingham** from Greasby, Wirral for these.

Firstly, get the crown from the top of the arch outside the main gate. Then get the potion from the chequered room by pushing the potted plants under the bench. Beetle off to the throne room and get the cross from the secret panel on the right hand side of the room and then put the cross and potion in a safe place. Taking the crown and scroll go down to the cellars.

Once in the cellars collect the egg timer (you'll need the key in the room next to the drawbridge) and enter the room with the reaper and two whirlwinds. Use the egg timer to freeze the nasties and collect the potion there. Now cross the drawbridge and enter the caverns (keep the L key depressed as it draws the screen).

Have the crown showing and search the walls to find the secret entrance to the tomb. Pick up the book, push the body off the slab and then push the right hand slab off the tomb and you'll fall through to another tomb where you'll find the book of light. Pick this up and use the scroll to transport yourself back to the courtyard. Go and pick up the cross and the first potion from where you left them.

The remaining three books can be collected from the guards quarters after freezing the wizard. Now go to the third tower (you need the key found outside the tower door). Dispose of the first reaper by dropping the potion and pushing it towards him. For the second reaper do the same with the cross and kill the third reaper like the other two by using the second lot of potion. Now go back down stairs to get the barrel, (you need to drop everything to be able to lift it) and take it upstairs. Place it under the wizard's window and put the crown in front of it. Jump onto the crown and then up onto the barrel and you can get into the wizard's room. Pick up the key from the table and stand by the hole in the floor so that you can make a quick exit when you drop the Book of Light.

Do just that and beat a hasty retreat. You've got the key to the main gate so use it, but don't forget to take the four books with you.

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS
Elite

Our technical hacking matey Antonio has been busy shuffling through the code of Elite's latest game. To make the proggy work just type it in, **RUN** it and press play on ye erstwhile cassette thingy. For anyone who thinks that the game is too easy, leave in the fast game line . . . Ho! Ho!

```
10 OPENOUT ''D''
20 MEMORY &12FF: MODE 1
30 LOAD ''!CODE'',&1800
40 REM FAST GAME POKE
50 FOR F=&57F5 TO &57F8:
POKE F,0: NEXT F
60 LIVES=255 REM CHANGE
FOR ANY NUMBER 1-255, 0 IS
SILLY
70 POKE &50A8, LIVES
80 REM INFINITE LIVES
90 PRINT ''INFINITE LIVES (Y/
N)''
100 A$=UPPER$(INKEY$): IF
A$<>''Y'' AND A$<>''N''
THEN 100
110 IF A$=''Y'' THEN POKE
&509B,0: POKE &509C,0:
POKE &509D,0
120 REM START ON ANY
LEVEL
130 INPUT ''LEVEL TO START
ON (1-3)''; A
140 IF A<1 OR A> THEN 130
150 IF A=1 THEN 180
160 POKE &50AC,A-2
170 POKE &50B0,A-1
180 PRINT ''MEGA ARMOUR
MODE (Y/N)''
190 A$=UPPER$(INKEY$): IF
A$<>''Y'' AND A$<>''N''
THEN 190
200 IF A$=''Y'' THEN POKE
&823A,1
210 CALL &5000
```

SPINDIZZY
Electric Dreams

Rewind tape, type in this listing from **Carl Jones**, a resident of Swansea and **RUN** it then press PLAY on the tape recorder.

This listing gives unlimited time.

```
10 MODE 1
20 FOR T=49152 TO 49170
30 READ A$: POKE
T,VAL(''d''+A$)
40 NEXT T
50 CALL 49152
60 DATA
21,40,00,11,C0,B0,3E,6A,CD,A
1,BC,3E,C9,32,5E,A8,C3,00,B0
```

POKES
POKES
POKES

MOVIE
Ocean

Here's some help for *Movie* buffs supplied by **P Cavers** of Taunton in Ciderset. Ooops! I mean Somerset.

1. Conversations play an important part in the game.
2. Only trust the right woman — you'll have to differenciate between the two evil twins.
3. Never stand in front of a gun-toting baddie.
4. Be careful when handling bombs.
5. When walking through a door, always try and sidle in next to the frame. The baddies always shoot at the centre of the door.
6. Always carry a gun.
7. If you haven't go a gun, use your fists.
8. Almost every room provides a clue so keep your eyes peeled.

THE LITTLE, BUT JOLLY USEFUL TIPS

FAIRLIGHT
The Edge

After killing a guard, put his helmet in a place which you won't visit again, or better still drop it into a whirlwind.

*Guards can be bought — use the money bags to lure them out of position.

*After killing an ogre, put a barrel on the spot where you killed him and he won't return.

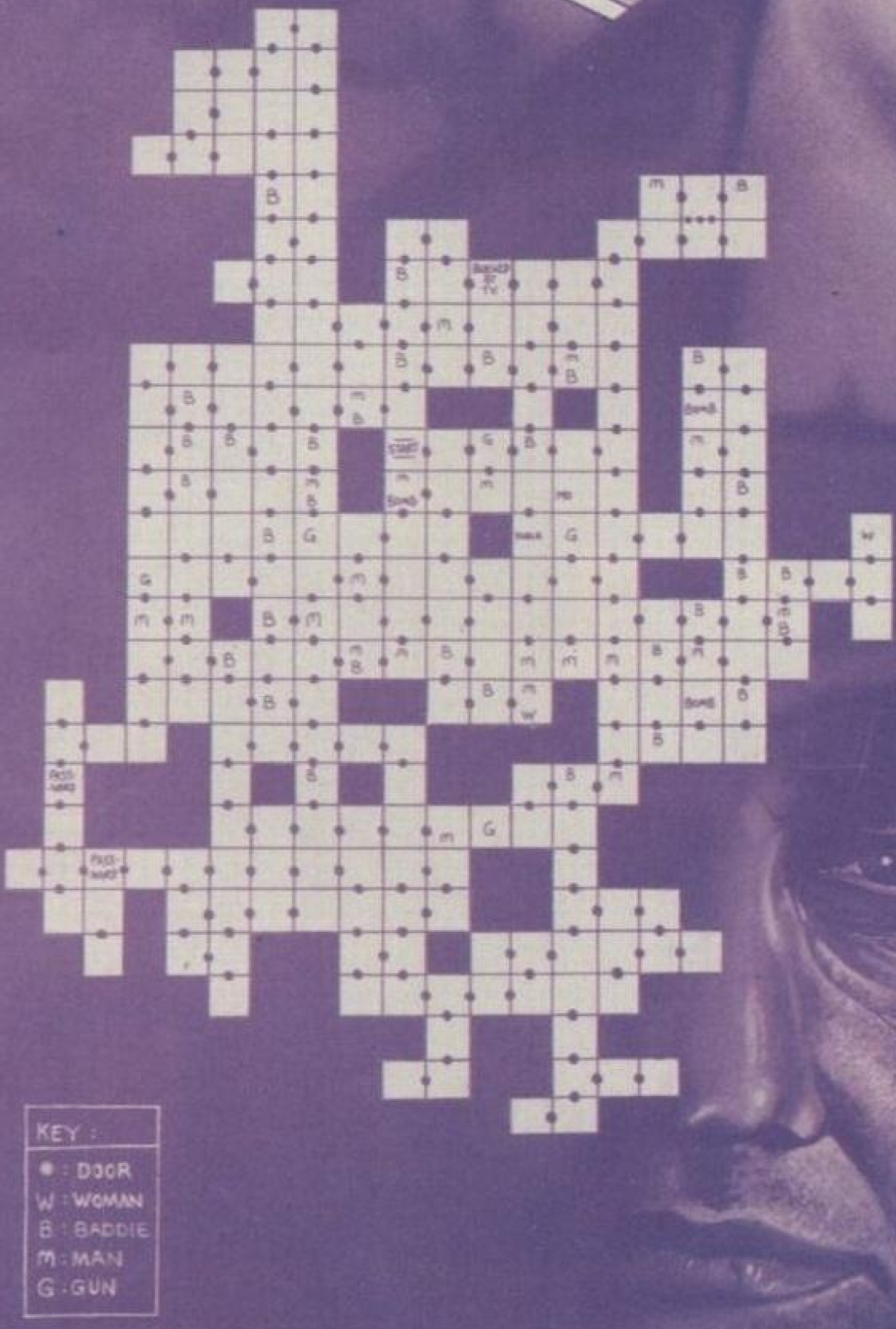
THREE WEEKS IN PARADISE
Mikro-Gen

Martyn Walker of Pontefract, W Yorks says that when you start a game you should run straight into a native. While the stars are spinning around Wally's head depress the middle two rows of the keyboard with a ruler or something. When the fat moron gets up you should have infinite lives to play with.

SWORDS AND SORCERY
PSS

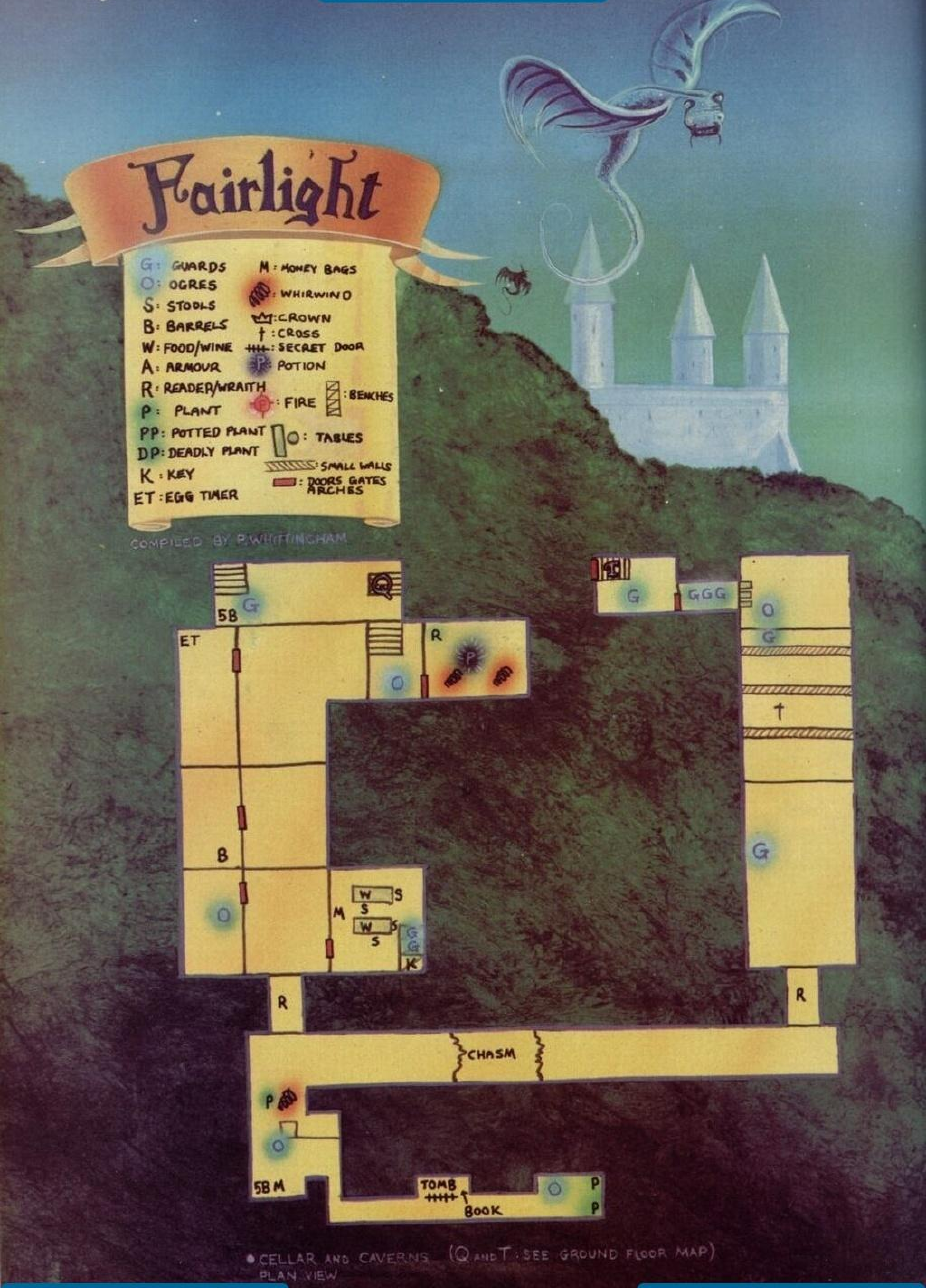
Here's a tiplet from our man of technical bent (or technical bent man), Anthony Clarke. He says if a creature insults you and you reply with compliments he'll become confused and you'll have enough time to lob a couple of fireballs in his general direction. It doesn't work on all the monsters, but is effective on the lower life forms.

MOVIE


START
BOMB
PASS-WORD
B
M
G
W
KEY :
● : DOOR
W : WOMAN
B : BADDIE
M : MAN
G : GUN

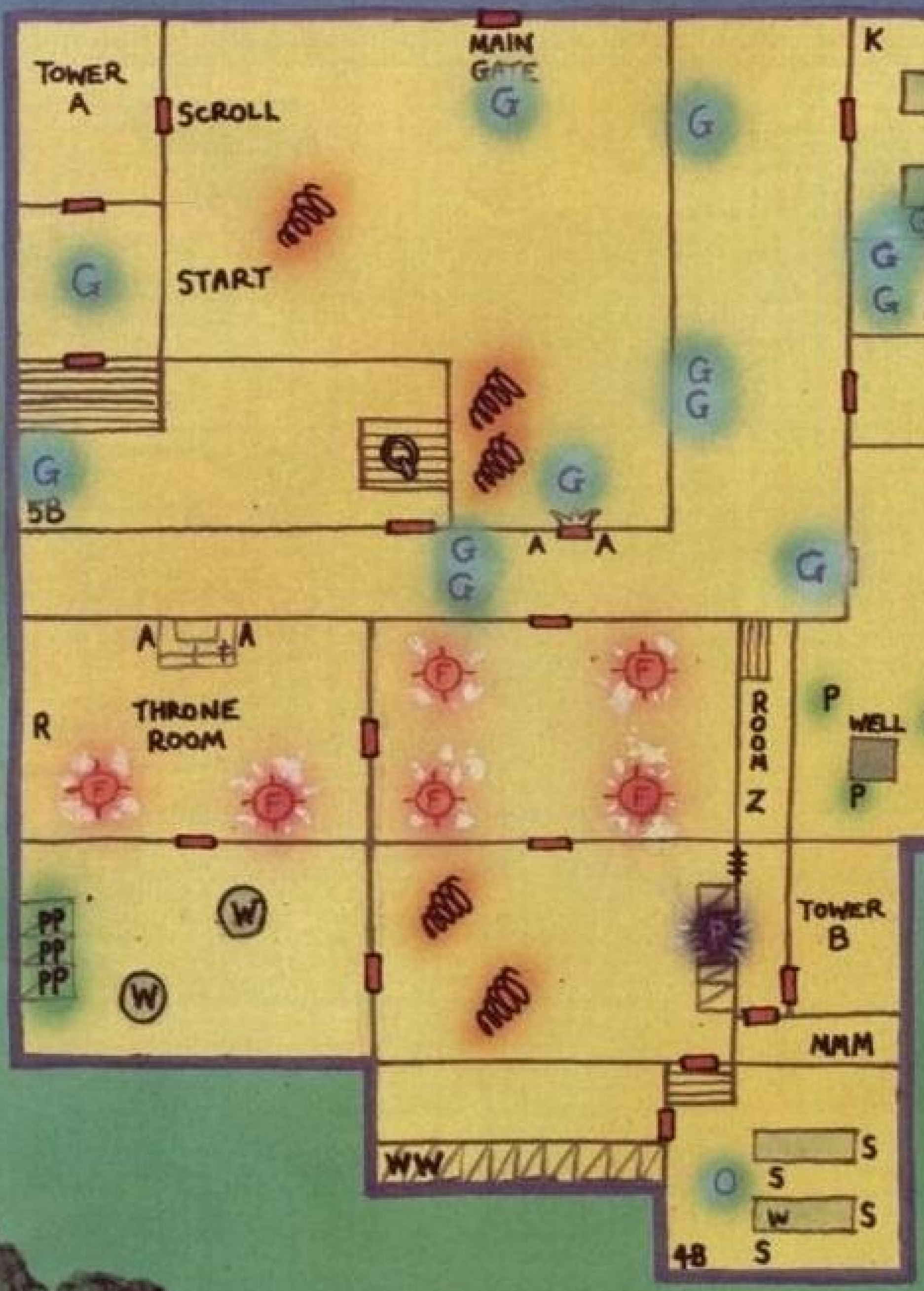
COMPILED BY SHAUN PEARSON

Ian Craig

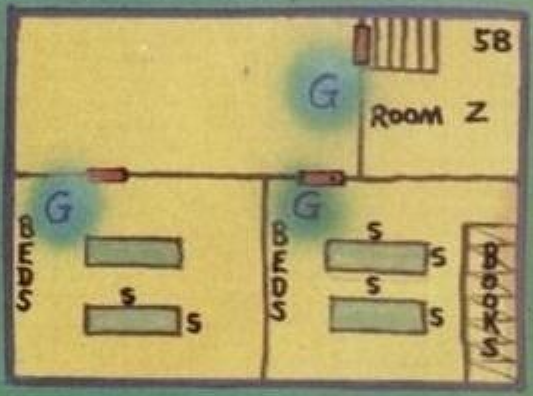

Fairlight
G: GUARDS
O: OGRES
S: STOOLS
B: BARRELS
W: FOOD/WINE
A: ARMOUR
R: READER/WRAITH
P: PLANT
PP: POTTED PLANT
DP: DEADLY PLANT
K: KEY
ET: EGG TIMER
M: MONEY BAGS
: WHIRWIND
: CROWN
† : CROSS
+++: SECRET DOOR
P: POTION
: FIRE
: BENCHES
: TABLES
: SMALL WALLS
: DOORS GATES ARCHES
5B
G
ET
R
P
O
B
W S
S
M
W S
S
G
G
K
G
GGG
O
G
†
G
R
R
CHASM
P
O
5B M
TOMB
++++
BOOK
O
P
P

COMPILED BY P.WHITTINGHAM

• CELLAR AND CAVERNS PLAN VIEW (Q AND T: SEE GROUND FLOOR MAP)


TOWER A
SCROLL
MAIN GATE
G
K
BEDS
START
S
ET DP ET
DP DP DP DP
Q
5B
A A
P
DP
TOWER C
THRONE ROOM
R
F
ROOM Z
WELL
K
W
PP
TOWER B
MMM
WW
O
48

• GROUND FLOOR PLAN VIEW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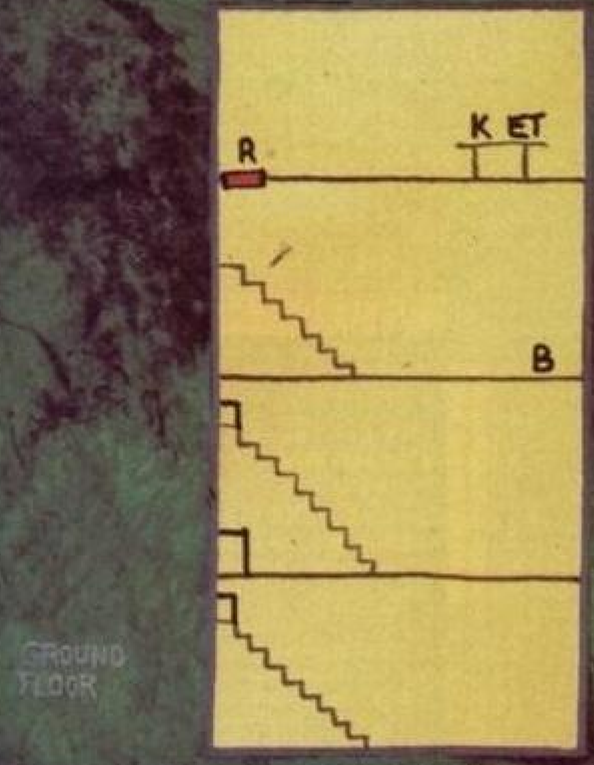
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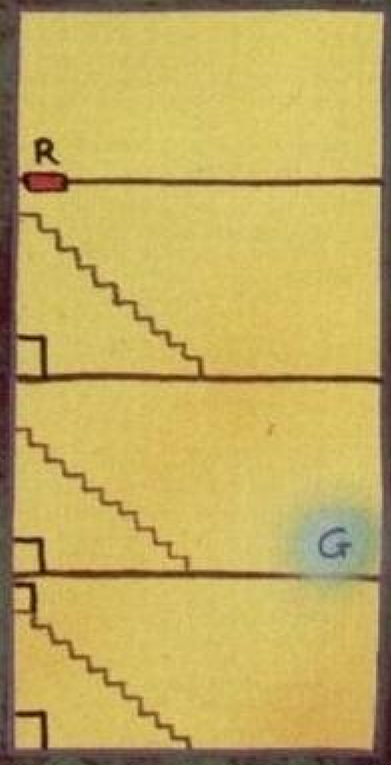
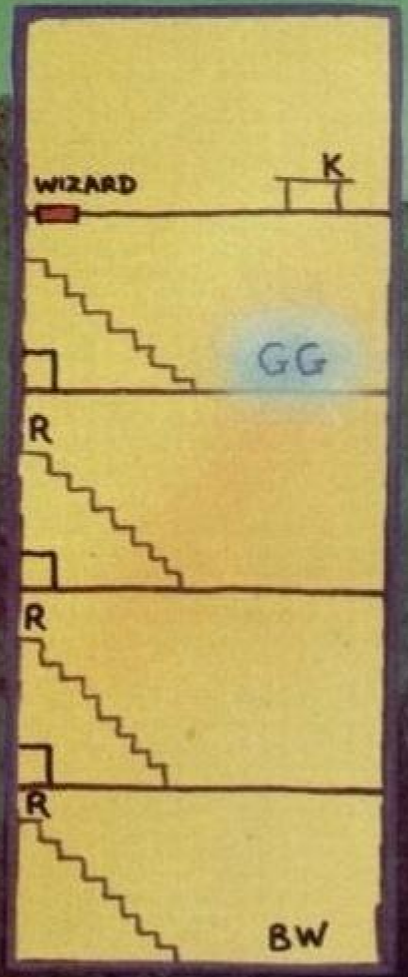
• TOWER A PROFILE



• TOWER B PROFILE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• TOWER C PROFILE

NB THERE IS A TELEPORT SYSTEM BETWEEN TOWERS A AND B

AM-TIPS

SHOGUN
Virgin

Stuck on Virgin's latest game and can't go any further? If that's your case then never fear — these useful tips from **D Ward**, who lives in Dublin 14, will provide lots of help.

ATTACK (Sword Icon): This is the best way of getting peasants and servants to become followers. If they don't yield after a couple of blows then it's best to end the fight by running away or smiling and then trying again at a later date. As a general rule you must never attack a Samurai or a bandit as usually you don't last long. If a character is killed, by you or anyone else, then he or she will reincarnate after some time. If the character was a member of the nobility then he or she'll return as a peasant.
BEFRIEND (Smile Icon): This isn't too much use for gaining followers because it takes too long doesn't usually work anyway. It's useful in conjunction with bribing and sometimes as an alternative to the dishonourable surrender in a hopeless situation.
SURRENDER (White flag icon): It's inadvisable to use this because if you do you'll lose all your followers (apart from the samurai) and your worldly posessions. Run away rather than use this soft option.
EXAMINE (Eye icon): This is very useful since it allows you to discover what a character is like, or identify an ambiguous object and get clues of its use. Using this icon you can work out how to get certain characters to follow you — a greedy person can be bribed, a weak one can be fought and a friendly one befriended and so forth. You can also examine skulls to see whose body it is.
GIVE (Hands icon): The main use of this function is to give characters objects as a bribe, especially useful for getting samurai and greedy peasants to follow you. Anything from ten to fifteen yen should be enough depending on the mood of the recipient. If you haven't got enough money then a samurai may appreciate a shield or helmet. Also money can be given to followers who turn against you (a follower who turns against you is usually one which you've captured in a fight) as an alternative to killing them.
DROP (Single hand icon): If your pockets are full you must drop an object before you can pick up another.
ORDER (Speech bubble icon): Most of your followers, with the exception of the nobles, will obey your commands. This icon has a number of uses — if you're looking for an object you can order a follower to get it and he or she will lead you to it, although don't forget to pick it up before they do. Ordering a Samurai to protect you is useful as anyone who attacks you will be dutifully attacked by the Samurai. If you feel that someone is becoming too powerful or proving to be too much of an annoyance then you can send out a hit squad of Samurai to assassinate them.

THE CHARACTERS

NOBLES: These are the most powerful characters in the game. If you start the game as one then you have an advantage since you'll be automatically granted ten followers. If you're not so lucky and don't get nobility status at the beginning of the game then capture a noble as soon as possible, because if you capture a lord then his followers will automatically follow you.

SAMURAI: Along with bandits, these are the most powerful fighters in the game. However, this doesn't mean that you'll be a good fighter if you start the game as one. It's inadvisable that you attack another samurai at the beginning of a game because you'll almost definitely lose, try bribery instead. Once they become followers they're yours for keeps — they'd rather die than let someone kill you.

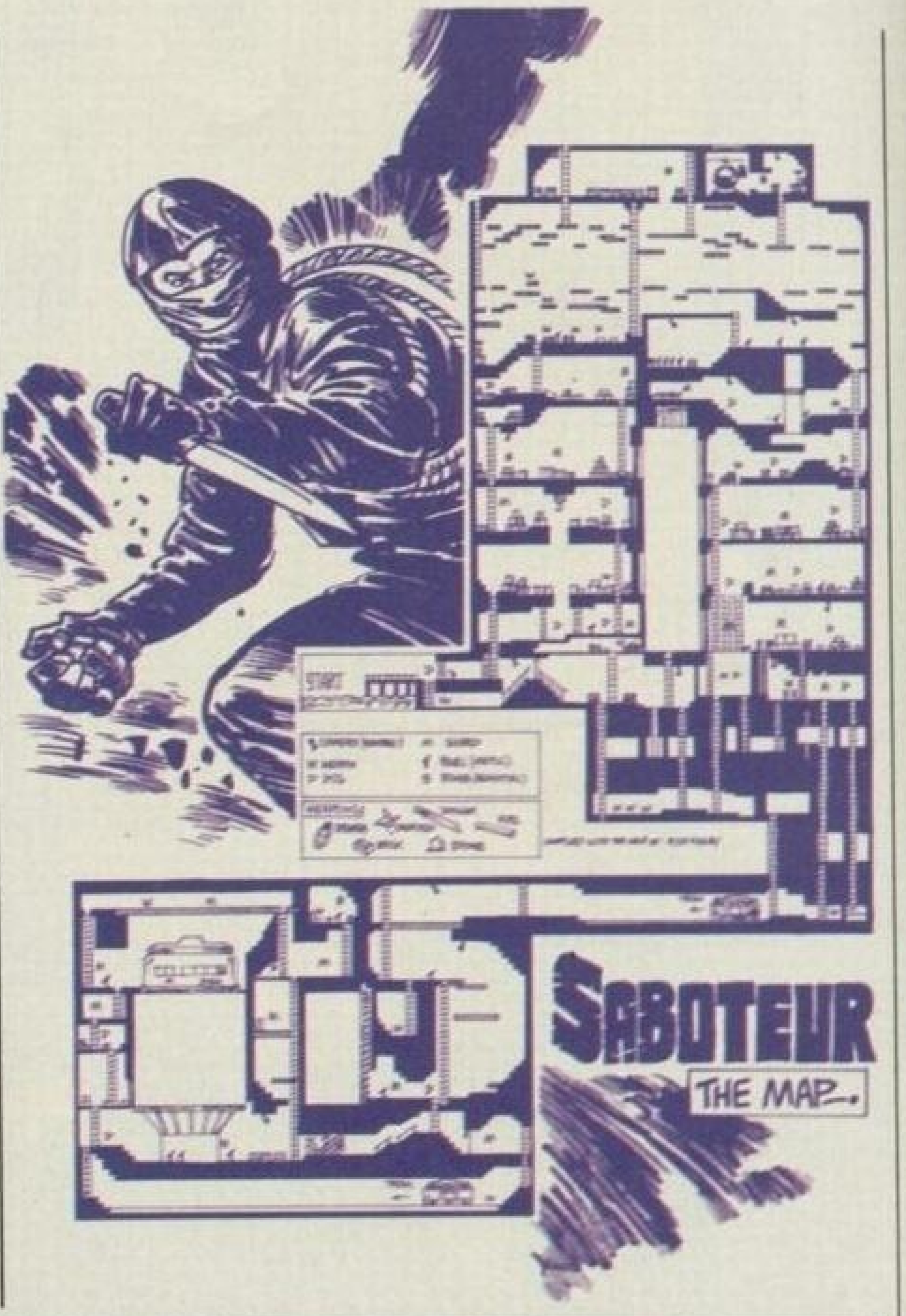
PEASANTS AND SERVANTS: These are the easiest characters to sway to your cause. Usually a couple of blows with your trusty sword will make them yield, although sometimes they'll fight back. If this happens then leave them alone and try later.

BANDITS: These guys are MEAN! They're found near the top of the mountain and attack without provocation if you go anywhere near them. Don't ever attack one — let others do the dirty work. If a bandit is killed then he'll come back as a weak peasant and will easily yield to you and say that he'll follow you. However, this is a lie and he won't carry out your orders.

PRIESTS: There are two priests in the game — Yamaha and Suzuki (ho ho). They usually yield to you in order to prevent a fight but, like the bandits, they won't become true followers.

CAPTAIN BLACKTHORNE: If you don't start the game as Blackthorne then his role will be taken by the computer and he will behave like a weak servant.

ZEN MASTER IKEMATSU: This chap resides in the Temple of the Zen Master, although he can be found roaming in the tunnel of love. He very rarely yields to you and usually wins in battle. Like the priests he is a purely decorative character and rarely interacts with the rest of the game.



THE OBJECTS

FOOD: Usually found in containers, bottles or jars. Boosts energy.

MONEY: Found as either loose coins or in bags. Boosts buying power.

ARMOUR: Shields, helmets and the ceremonial sword can be found on the beach. Useful for bribing samurai.

KEYS: Used to open locked doors.

PRAYER WHEEL: No apparent use.

PHILOSOPHY BOOK: Found in the old palace and used to get into the Temple if the Zen Master.

ROSE: Found on the east side of the mountain above the Passage of the Wind and used to get through the door at the bottom of the Tunnel of Love.

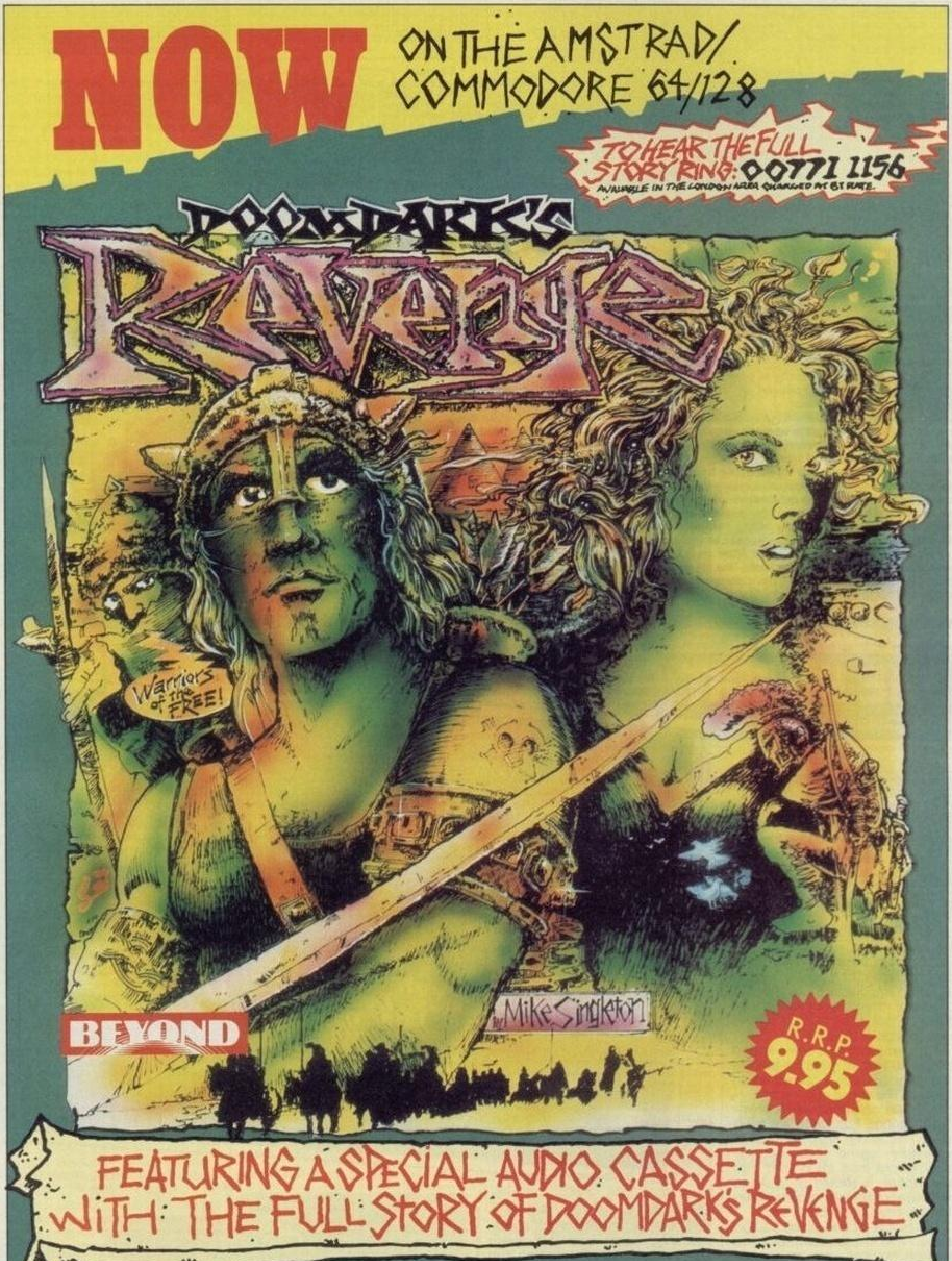
MIRROR: This is one of the four objects you have to take to the Shrine of the Night Buddha in the palace in order to become a Shogun. This is the token of your enlightenment and is found in the meditation room in the Temple of the Zen Master.

LOVE POEM: Another of the four objects. This is the token of your compassion and is found in the room that the rose lets you into.

JADE DRAGON: The third of the four objects and a token of your strength. It's found on the west side of the mountain above the Passage of the Wind.

GOLD BUDDHA: The last of the four objects is a token of your piety and can be found in the Temple of Buddha.

Righto! That's it until the new moon. The winner of this month's £20 software goes to **Daragh Ward** for his excellent *Shogun* tips. I'm off to Blackpool, land of the arcades, next week — yipeeee! Pity there's no room for an arcade tips page . . . Oh well, see you next month and don't forget to send your tips in. Here's the address if you've forgotten it: **AMTIPS, AMTIX MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 2DB**. Byeeee!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Doomdark's Revenge is available now from software dealers everywhere. In case of difficulty write to: Beyond, British Telecom, Wellington House, Upper St. Martin's Lane, LONDON WC2H 9DL.

ADVENTURE

THE GRAND PARADE OF LIFELESS PACKAGING

This month there's another piece of quality home grown software to bring to your attention. Just like those reviewed last month, it's an original idea well implemented as a game. The inspiration of authors has not been found lacking as yet. I'm sure plenty more such games will arrive in the fullness of time. But why are they always privately produced? They are normally of a professional standard but because they are produced by amateurs, very few people ever get to see them.

It's about time software houses put away the old troll bashing scenarios and gave us more unusual fare. I for one am sick to death of wandering around trying to find new batteries for my lamp and crawling through one way cracks in cavern mazes. I want to try escaping from POW camps, get involved in political intrigue, explore the hidden recesses of the mind, become a celebrity — anything but kill off a half slushed serpent with an over zealous sparrow! And I want to do it from the safety of my computer keyboard. Why is this so hard for software houses to understand?

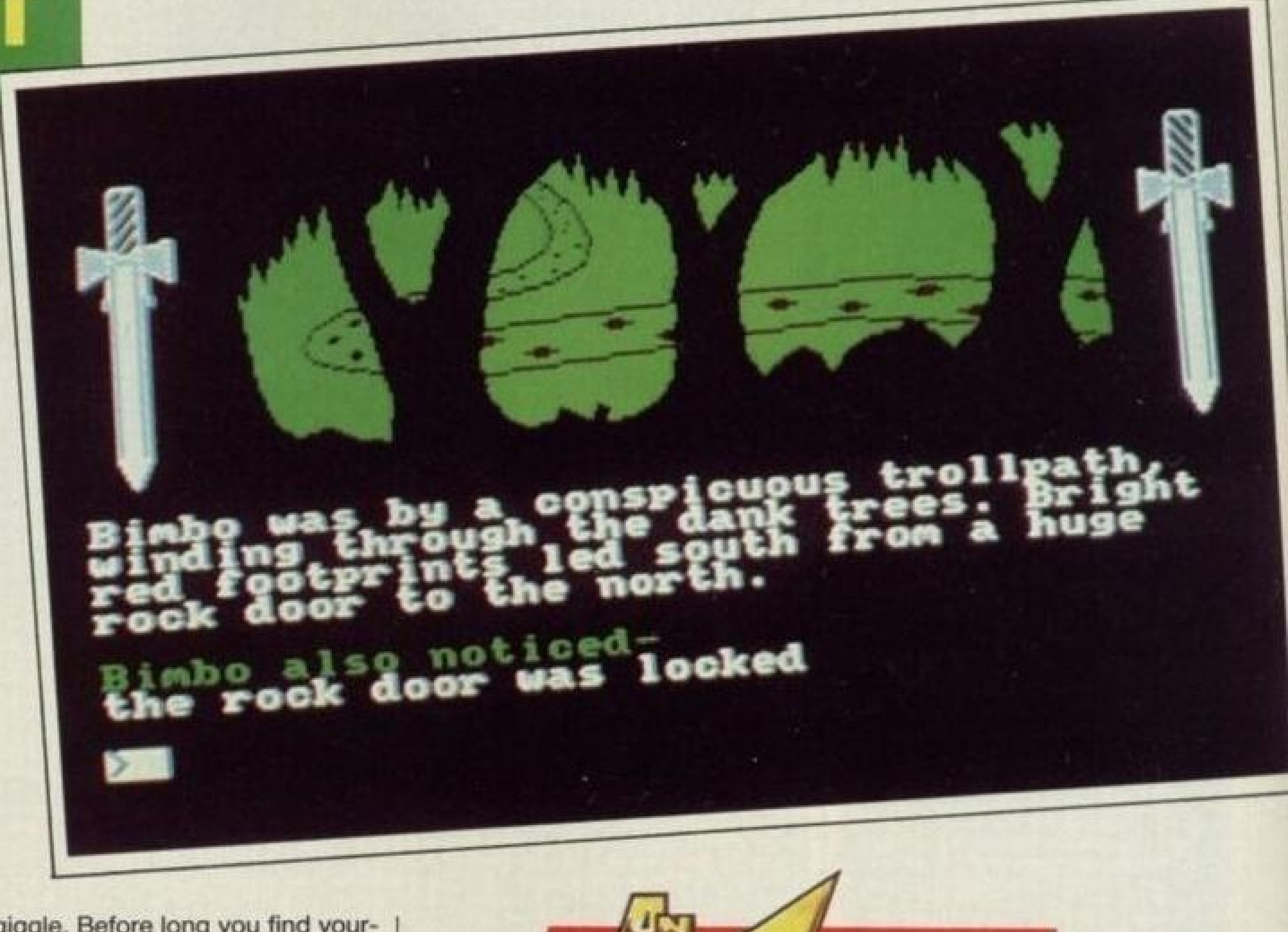
This month, I received a letter from Neil Scrimgeour, author of *The Lost Phirious*. It looks like his company may soon end up being no more than a memory, despite good reviews of his products. Others will run into the same problems before long, I'm certain. Yet Neil, Anthony Collins, Richard Robinson, John Betteridge and several others are all competent adventure authors. Perhaps together they might succeed where individually, they cannot. An adventure designers' cartel approaching software houses with collections of adventures that have already been well received, can make some headway, apart from being an excellently situated think tank for new ideas.

To this end, I'm opening up the forum space in the Arcana for debate on the subject. The authors can feel free to contact each other right here. I might also suggest that if such an idea was to be accepted by those concerned, they find an independent individual to chair the group to ensure fairness when dealing with each game. By the way, someone has already suggested yours truly but I'm afraid I plan to spend a year dead on Mars for tax reasons. Good luck.

In case you have ever wondered where some of my obscure intro titles come from, nine times out of ten they are taken from song lyrics. I'm a great fan of lyrics — mood capturing or provocative, good lyrics give me ideas. They could be a great source of inspiration for an adventure game. '*It*'s only knock and knowall, but I like it . . .'
Be seeing you.

THE BOGGIT

CRL (Delta 4), £7.95 cass



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Bimbo was by a conspicuous trollpath,
winding through the dank trees. Bright
red footprints led south from a huge
rock door to the north.

Bimbo also noticed-
the rock door was locked

>
```

The latest offering from CRL is another Delta 4 game, co-authored by the inimitable Fergus McNeill and Judith Child. *The Boggit* as the title suggests, is a spoof of *The Hobbit*. The game is made up of three Quilled sections (all illustrated) that run across two sides of the cassette. The game itself is packed in a similar fashion to *Robin of Sherlock* (reviewed a couple of months ago) with a tongue in cheek map printed on the reverse side of the inlay.

The game includes some sound effects as well as graphics but the real gems in Delta 4 games are in the text. The sense of humour Fergus and co have used well in previous offerings has been excelled here. This is the first humourous adventure game I've actually laughed out loud at. Before I go any further, it should be pointed out that some of the humour is particularly cruel but subtlely so.

The plot is picked up as you go along. This means having to sit through several *very* long messages describing other characters' situations and backgrounds. It's all very entertaining stuff and the fact that it eats up memory doesn't really matter because of the multiple loads. However, it isn't just the text that makes you giggle. Before long you find yourself overloaded with credit cards, message cards and just about every other type of card you can think of.

When Grandalf does his impersonation of the man from the Milk Tray with a box of explosive and poisonous chocolates, Bimbo gets bitten on the loo, you meet the three trolls (complete with Ber-

AN AMTIX! ACCOLADE

nard Matthews caricature) and encounter two dodgy elves, you know this game isn't going to be a run of the mill affair. There's a lot more to see and do than in *Robin of Sherlock*. As a result, the game flows better and appears less contrived. Just when you're concentrating on something, the game starts talking to you about something totally different. There's even a nice tribute to Steve Meretzky of Infocom at one point.

The vocabulary is reasonable and the various room descriptions are full of sublte humour. The graphics are colourful and well proportioned yet only compliment the the game rather than impose on it. A good decision was made to try and put any humour into the graphics (as opposed to those in *Hunchback — The Adventure*). Some of the responses, whilst written in Fergus McNeill's suitably off-beat style, are still lacking in parts but there are no other faults, so far as I have been able to determine.

The Boggit is an excellent step forward for Delta 4 and they deserve to do well from it. It's always good fun to send something up, but a well written spoof is a rarity. In this field, Delta 4 are on the way to establishing themselves as the masters. The game is a must for those who enjoy both sophisticated satire and a good adventure.

Atmosphere	91%
Plot	93%
Interaction	81%
Lastability	90%
Value for money	91%
Overall	91%

MANDRAGORE

Infogrames, £14.95 disk only

Flop of the month time. If you have ever wanted an *Ultima* type game for your straddles, don't think this game will solve your problems and end your quest. *Mandragore* comes from the French company, Infogrames who have finally set up a British subsidiary to sell their games. *Mandragore* is interesting from the point that *Ultima* games are not available for Amstrad owners and yet are the most popular RPG's available for the home computer. Even if you owned a different micro, an imported copy of an *Ultima* game can cost *£50!*

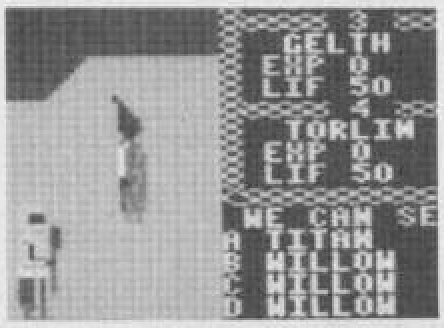
So at first glance it would appear that Infogrames have not only satisfied a demand but have done so at a reasonable price. The game is nicely presented too, with a very pretty loading screen and some music which, whilst not fantastic, is better than that in *Qor* (my ears are still recovering from that one). From this point you can restore an old game, set about designing a group of four characters for a new game or use a computer designed party of adventurers. Characters consist of the usual bundle of randomly rolled characteristics, details of sex, colour and other atmosphere adding but primarily useless attributes.

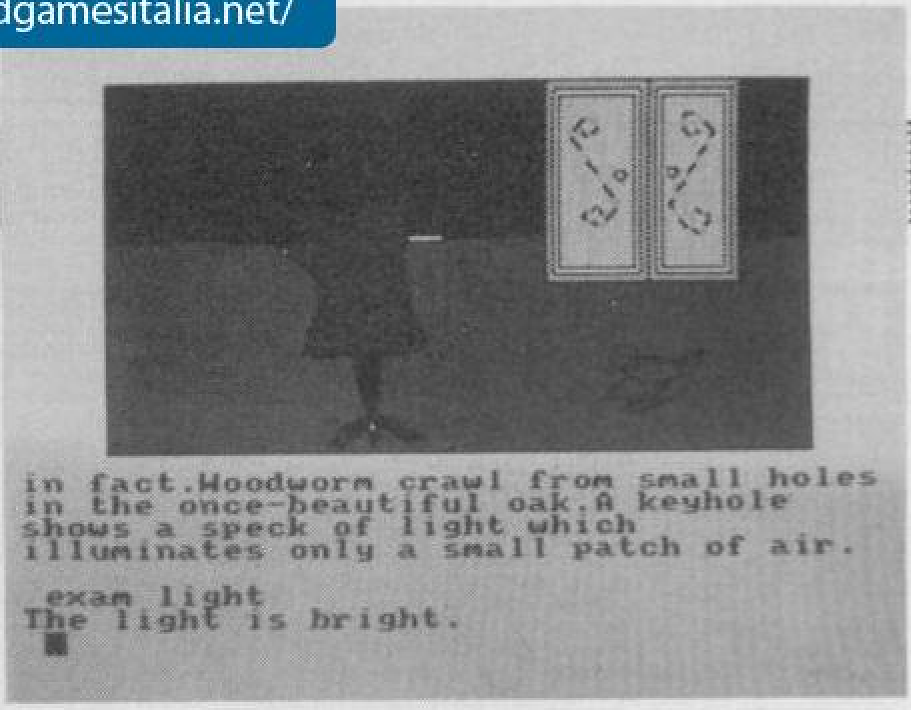
Once the game begins, you wander across a crudely drawn but fairly large landscape until you have an encounter. All kinds of fearsome beasties occupy this strange land. When you encounter them, the screen changes to a close up of the event complete with some limited animation. The graphics are crude throughout, not a patch on those in *Swords & Sorcery* though they are considerably more colourful.

There are also castles (well, Chateaux) and villages to visit. These are displayed as single redefined characters until entered when they expand to allow exploration. At these places it is possible to buy supplies and equipment or hunt for treasure and magical items. That just about sums the game up really. The main aim is to progress and explore with your characters, getting fun out of the game from its variety rather than intensity and consistency of plot.

Around the main display which takes up two thirds of of the screen, are items of useful information. To the right is a statistic by statistic breakdown of your party. Beneath the display is a message area displaying your last input (such as 'North') and notification of events by the program like, 'You are under attack.' It's all pretty bland. The animation is so bad it is amusing to watch but otherwise the game has little to offer anyone but the most undemanding of adventurers. Assuming you are not one of those, it would be better to leave this one alone.

Atmosphere	40%
Plot	36%
Lastability	70%
Value for money	50%
Overall	48%





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in fact.Woodworm crawl from small holes
in the once-beautiful oak.A keyhole
shows a speck of light which
illuminates only a small patch of air.

 exam light
The light is bright.
```

TREASURE TUNNELS / THE EXPERIENCE

The Plasma Touch, £1.50 cassette

Treasure Tunnels is a new budget game from a company mysteriously called The Plasma Touch. It's a mixed graphics text game written on the increasingly popular *GAC* by Incentive and as such, takes advantage of multiple command inputs and advanced parsing. The game comes simply packaged in a single cassette case along with a cheap but adequate inlay.

The game itself is pure, old-fashioned dungeoneering. Recover the treasures from the cave complex and return each one to the correct room of an old and apparently disused house on the moor and it's game over time. Apparently this is intended to form the first part of an eventual quadrilogy with attention focused more on the main character than the actual plot. It shows.

If the plot dates back to the pre-Cambrian era, it's simply because this is what the game's author, Richard Robinson (also the sole driving force behind TPT) wanted to write an adventure recreating the classic feel of those early, hack 'n' slay games. What can I say except he's done a good job.

Some of the graphics (mainly the early ones) are both well drawn and humourous. Later they start becoming more of a token gesture which could have probably been left out without detriment to the game itself. The quality of puzzles and play never lapses below reasonable. Most of the time, the standard is very high indeed. There are some old favourites like how to put a rare Ming vase down without breaking it, to goblets on high columns and apparently useless wigs.

This is a run of the mill game in so many respects and yet it does well to capture a sense of nostalgia and atmosphere that have escaped some more sophisticated efforts. It's really worth the asking price on its own. What makes the whole thing even more enjoyable however, is a 'give-away' game on the reverse side of the cassette called *The Experience*.

Now here's a game that really shows off the author's skill at adventure creation. The idea of *The Experience* is to discover what the experience itself actually is. The successful punter wins a prize, though Mr Robinson could not tell me what this would be. The game is definitely intriguing though. A dark room inhabited by yourself and menacing shadows, a tailor's dummy that stares at you despite the lack of a head, a wardrobe (locked) with bright light coming through the keyhole, dusty and rhythmically vibrating walls and no sign of a way out.

The game is by no means as large as the first effort but great attention has been made to a wide variety of responses to possible actions including the examination of almost anything. To be honest, this got most people in the office hooked when I loaded it up the other day and between a few of us, I think we nearly finished it. A compulsive game that encourages a thought provoking attitude to adventure gaming. Excellent. Oh, one thing — don't swear at it! Available from Plasma Touch, 143 Oakfield Road, Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 5RZ.

TREASURE TUNNELS

Atmosphere	82%
Plot	45%
Interaction	66%
Lastability	71%

THE EXPERIENCE

Atmosphere	85%
Plot	86%
Interaction	88%
Lastability	83%
Value for money	84%
Overall	83%

NYTHYHEL

50/50 Club Software, £1.50 cassette

Fresh out of the 50/50 fold, this game is written by the club's organiser and author of *Theseus* (reviewed last issue). Inspiration (as the title will suggest to those in the know) comes from Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* RPG, itself based on the erudite works of the late H P Lovecraft. The game's full title is *Files of the Occult (P.I.): Nythyhel*. As with its predecessor, the game is *GACked*, in two parts and makes full use of the utility's graphic capabilities.

In this first episode of what is to become a series of unknown length, you play the part of a professor who runs a private investigation company specialising in the Occult. One of your colleagues has been mysteriously murdered whilst being involved in pursuing Occult phenomenon. Your quest is to find out what happened.

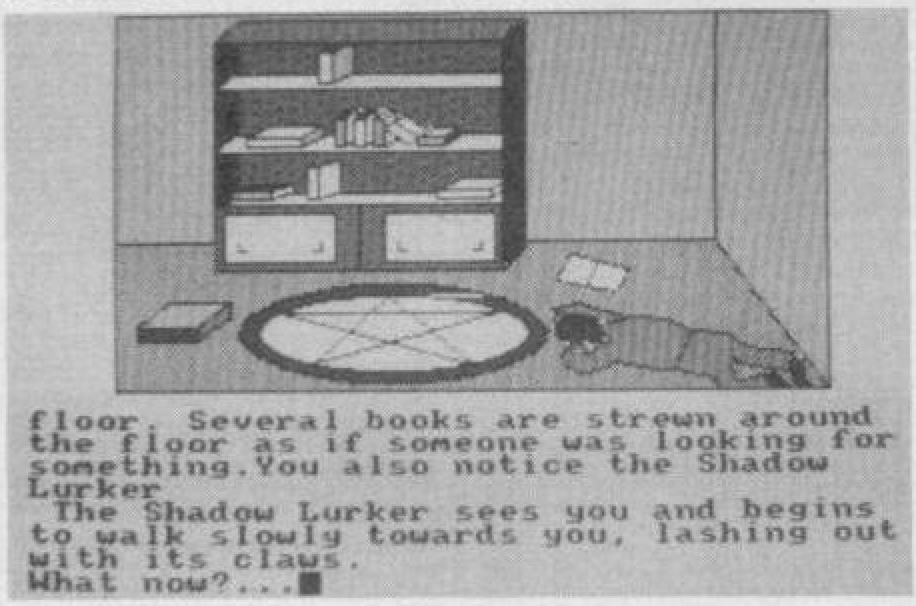
It's apparent right from the start that supernatural forces are at work as you are attacked by fairly ferocious beastie almost straight away. Judicious use of available magic helps you overcome this particular monstrosity. Apart from magic, the game plays heavily on character interaction, something I enjoyed a lot. Most of the travelling is done by taxi and train and helps add atmosphere to the game considerably.

A few old legends are tied in for good measure with all kinds of gothic horror influences rearing their heads. I almost hid behind my trusty toadstool for this one (he said, sliding into charicature with miraculous ease). Good, hefty stuff with a refreshing style. More of this ilk would not come amiss by any means.

In many respects, this game is an evident improvement on *Theseus*. In others, it is not. Many of the graphic screens were not badly done, but so uninteresting, they should have been omitted. The game also has a bug or two waiting to pounce. A certain course of action at a certain railway station can leave the player in an infinite loop. It's possible to escape from this, but the bug should not be there anyway. At other times, things your character might say (ie in inverted commas) will actually be read as a separate command by the adventure. Apart from these flaws, the only other moan I can dig up is situated at the start of the game. Okay, this is an investigative adventure. Fine. But the need to constantly examine everything in the first location takes things a bit far. Especially when the command only tells you that you have seen something. More interrogation of the game is required before the nature of the discovery is revealed.

For all this, I loved the game. I'm a great fan of both the Cthulhu mythos and the game mentioned above from Chaosium (question — is Mr Collins another Pete Austin in the making, after all, he is a fan of Chaosium also?) and the atmosphere oozes from the screen with all the terror of a melting Shoggoth even though the original 1920's setting has been abandoned in favour of a conventional one. The actual scenario is totally original and plagiarism is one thing Mr Collins cannot be accused of. Though slightly on the easy side, it's worth your pennies if you want something to keep you awake at night. Those of you who know nothing about the club (see last issue) or wish to obtain this game can scare themselves to death by writing (with an SAE) to **Anthony Collins, 17, Larch House, 37, Shawsdale Road, Bromford, Birmingham, B36 8DG.**

Atmosphere	84%
Plot	83%
Interaction	82%
Lastability	76%
Value for money	85%
Overall	84%



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floor. Several books are strewn around
the floor as if someone was looking for
something.You also notice the Shadow
Lurker
 The Shadow Lurker sees you and begins
to walk slowly towards you, lashing out
with its claws.
What now?...█
```

THE HOBBIT

Melbourne House, £7.95 cassette

Many years after its first appearance, Melbourne House's classic game, *The Hobbit* has been re-released (minus the book) in a new and improved format. It just goes to show, you can't keep a good game down. Now packaged in an ever so chic double cassette box, the game is actually cheaper this time around. The old instruction booklet has been reprinted as a fold out leaflet but otherwise hasn't been changed much — it still boasts the game is the most sophisticated ever devised for a home micro. That may have been the case five years ago but I think the trade descriptions people might disagree with MH now!

MH uses a parser called Inglish. It is better than the average offering but is flawed nonetheless. Only comparable to Infocom's advanced parsing in its day, it now has to compare with Level 9's system. It doesn't compare favourably. Still, the game has been made available once more even if none of the bugs have been ironed out.

The plot is tied closely to that of the original book, with Bilbo depending very much on his companions for success against old Smaug the dragon. Nevertheless, reading the book isn't going to solve the adventure for you. Little details are often either added or omitted in a way which quite effectively makes the novel redundant for all but the most basic of information. The game isn't easy. That helped it immensely a few years ago and won' hinder it now. Newcomers to the game will find they have the advantage of hundreds of people who have solved the game, willing to help. Solutions to the game have been published in several books and one has even been written specifically for the game. It must be one of the best supported adventures ever written.

The graphics still retain their charm. In their day, they too were something quite astounding. Now they are nostalgic in their unassuming simplicity. To be honest, I would have rather seen this game bundled with *Lord of the Rings*. It might have even made the latter worth the asking money. For all its apparent complexity, *LOR* isn't a patch on this game. Melbourne House were practically made on the success of *The Hobbit* and with the possible exception of *Sherlock*, I don't think they have ever matched it since in terms of quality.

How many people are going to rush out and by the re-released version, I cannot tell. I fear however, that they won't be many in number. If you don't have this game in your collection, I do advise that you get yourself a copy. It's a lot of fun despite the fact that it's beginning to show its age. Here's to another few years of life for the adventure that changed the whole UK market.

Atmosphere	83%
Plot	82%
Interaction	80%
Lastability	79%
Value for money	76%
Overall	81%

A LITTLE BIT AT THE END

As you must appreciate (with all my moaning), space in this good journal is always hard to come by. Therefore, when I looked at last month's home grown offerings, I had to discuss them briefly at the beginning of the Arcana. They really should have received proper reviews. Now I have a little space, allow me to sum up those games in more practical fashion.

THESEUS (parts 1 & 2)

Atmosphere	85%
Plot	86%
Interaction	72%
Lastability	73%
Value for money	83%
Overall	82%

Contact: Anthony Collins, 50/50 Software, 17, Larch House, 37, Shawsdale Road, Bromford, Birmingham, B36 8DG.

ESCAPE FROM KOSHIMA

Atmosphere	79%
Plot	80%
Interaction	69%
Lastability	68%
Value for money	N/A
Overall	73%

GUARDIAN

Atmosphere	84%
Plot	86%
Interaction	71%
Lastability	79%
Value for money	N/A
Overall	82%

Contact: John Betteridge, 39, Deercote, Hollinswood, Telford, Shropshire.

AMTIX ARCANA

Here we are again for a veritable dish of adventurers' delights. No maps this month, it's all down to the hard core stuff. From now on, every issue will have a contact list of expert adventurers, all willing to lend a hand for an SAE and an explanation of your particular problem. Don't let that stop you asking me for help though. I can usually help sooner or later — normally later. But this way you have a choice. Please help these people help you. Always send an SAE and be specific when telling them where you're stuck. Writing to thank them afterwards wouldn't do any harm either. Off we go . . .

ALLIED ADVENTURERS INC.

Roy Alexander: *Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Message from Andromeda, Subsunk, Gremlins* — complete. Help on *Spellbound, Robin of Sherwood*.
43, Denmark Rd, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2DE

J Lycett: *Return to Eden, Emerald Isle, Jewels of Babylon, Forest at World's End, Fantasia Diamond, The Hobbit*.
24, Willingdon Park Drive, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN22 OBS

Tim Gurney: *Never Ending Story, The Hobbit, Warlord, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Jewels of Babylon, Message from Andromeda, Classic Adventure, Mordon's Quest, Classic Cave Adventure*.
10, Garwyn Ave, Roundwood, Meliden, Prestatyn, Clwyd, N Wales, LL 19

Sam Meldrum: *Fantasia Diamond*.
Whites Hill, Amersham Rd, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 2UG

John Manifold: Rusty Blade Helpline/ GLAMDRING fanzine.
1, High St, Ulceby, South Humberside, DN39 6TG

Pat Winstanley: Adventure Probe Fanzine (inc. Adventure Helpline)
13, Hollington Way, Wigan, WN3 6LS

John R Barnsley: Almost everything — Amstrad based or not!
32, Herrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs, ST17 9EB

If you want to be added to the list, just write in and tell me which games you can help with and remember to give your full name and address. Of course, any useful tips you land in my lap could win you twenty pounds worth of Amstrad software!

MYSTERIOUS MISCELLANY

I received a copy of Tim Gurney's new fanzine, *Goblins Cavern* this month. It looks a tasty morsel as well. A teeny bit pricey at 99p a copy but packed with hints and tips on a variety of games. Anyway, as Tim fairly points out, photocopying is expensive. A large SAE along with a PO/ Cheque made payable to Tim will get you a copy. Address is as above.

I also managed to get another piece of homegrown software this month called *The City*. Its author is one John McNair from Glasgow. I've had a look at the game and it seems pretty interesting. A full review will appear next month.

LETTERS

Dear Sean,
In another magazine for the Amstrad, someone wrote in saying they could help with the following adventures; *Valhalla, Urban Upstart, Time Machines, Circus, Arrow of Death, Ten Little Indians, Twin Kingdom Valley* and *Perseus and Andromeda*. Are these games really available for the Amstrad, or was this this some kind of mistake?
John McNaire, Cardonald, Glasgow

Most of the adventures you name are by Channel 8. As far as I know, none of them are available on the Amstrad. Trust us to have to correct someone else's error!
SM

Dear Sean
To Jeremy Ball's problem in *Forest at World's End* in your July issue, he should PROO VOU DRGS YLD. It is important to use that syntax to PROO HLNVGSRMT DRGS HLNVGSRMT. This will be useful later on. But don't be too hasty when you meet the WIZTLM. The same syntax is needed in some other Interceptor adventures, such as *Message from Andromeda*. There is also a IZMWLN VOVNVMG. Most times you will SRG the VOU but sometimes you will NRHH. Likewise the VOU will sometimes NRHH you, but eventually you will be PROOVW.

In your editorial piece in the same issue, you rightly state that AMTIX! has a policy of not printing listings but wrongly that it does not publish them. Only a few pages further back, there were two listings. These were of course, in conjunction with entering POKEs..Surely adventure hints are the equivalent of POKEs for adventurers or do you and/or the management think the joystick bashers are capable of entering listings and adventurers are not? If anything, it is likely to be the other way around.

Suely a policy should be for the benefit of your readers? You state that you found Andrew Appleton's cassette very useful yet you deny your readers the same help. This seems to be carrying blind adherence to your policy a bit too far. Because of your policy, I thought it would be better to send an easy to read listing for a decoder, but if you want a one liner, here it is in under 255 bytes.

```
10 CLS: DIM a$(26), z$(26): FOR
x=1 TO 26: a$(x)=CHR$(64+x):
z$(x)=CHR$(91−x):NEXT
20   LINE   INPUT" ENTER
CODE>" ;c$:  c$=UPPER$(c$):
PRINT" TRANSLATION>" ;;
FOR x=1 TO LEN(c$): d$=MID$
(c$,x,1):  FOR  y=1  TO  26:  IF
d$=a$(y) THEN d$=z$(y): y=26
30  NEXT:  PRINT  d$;:  NEXT:
PRINT: GOTO 20
```

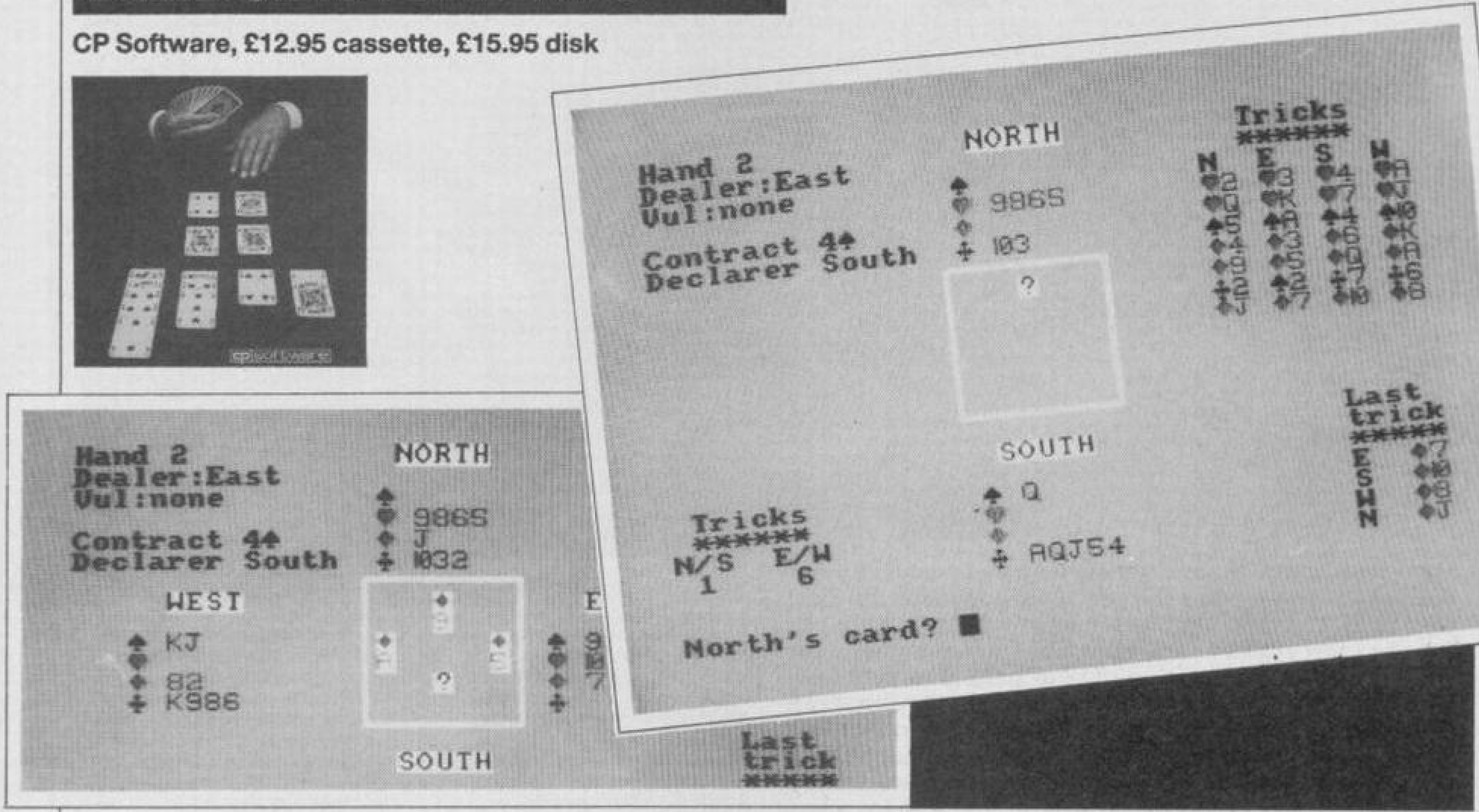
Kendall Johns, Deptford, London

Okay, I bow to pressure. For those of you who are unsure what all this is about, Kendall has supplied a small program to decode my adventure hints quickly. Treasure this listing. I'm printing no more. You have been warned.
SM

And so, that's it for this month. Hopefully those wonderful people in layout will give me more space next month. Meanwhile, we must be grateful for our lot. Any tips, hints, maps, games, fanzines, box girder bridges etc . . . Send them to: **AMTIX! ARCANA, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ.** Best offer gets £20 worth of Amstrad software. Yum, yum!

BRIDGE PLAYER 3

CP Software, £12.95 cassette, £15.95 disk



The latest release from CP Software is Bridge Player 3. This is an improved version of Bridge Player 2.

The manual, an eight page booklet, explains how to enter bids but not the conventions and how to bid. The selection of cards during play and the main options are also mentioned.

Lee

CRITICISM

There's no doubt this is a step up from your run-of-the-mill bridge game. Not only can it cope with bidding conventions, it can even play the hand! Not that defending in bridge is the most life-fulfilling process, it does add a little spice to the bidding round. No longer is it a question of what contract am I going to get, but am I going to get the contract. The graphics are alright, there are a few things which could have been done to smooth the play of the hand, such as assuming a suit when you throw away, when it couldn't possibly be ambiguous, but it all plays quite smoothly. The game has a thorough grasp of the rules and scoring which is reassuring to see — it even gave bonus points for having suit honours.

Once the program is loaded the first set of options is given. The computer can deal the cards or the player can enter a deal for analysis and play. The points can be biased towards North/South, or East/West or not at all. After this, the opening one, no trump bid is customised, strong, weak or variable can be chosen. This is necessary because there are different bidding systems in common use. Lastly the choice of bidding and playing or just playing is given and the game commences.

Richard

CRITICISM

Alright so I've never even played bridge before; but even so BRIDGE PLAYER 3 seems to be a rather neat introduction to the game. The instruction booklet is written for people who play a lot of bridge; unfortunately, in its help for novices, it falls down somewhat; but with a little help from one of the more accomplished players in the office, I was off to a reasonable, if not flying start. If you already have a good knowledge of the game, this version looks to be a winner. If not, I wouldn't recommend that you use BRIDGE PLAYER 3 as your starting block, but with the accompliment of a good card games book, or a willing expert in the field, you might well find yourself enjoying what appears to be a good game.

The human player always sits in the South position with the computer playing the parts of North, East and West. If you decided to bid then the bidding takes place. The bidding is based on the ACOL system and Stayman and Blackwood convensions are understood although the computer will not start them. South's cards and the order of the bids are displayed while the bidding is taking place. It is possible to restart the bidding by typing 'B' instead of a legal bid. If East and West win the bidding then the computer will play these hands as declarers and try to make the contract.

The screen shows South's hand, the dummy hand, last trick, the contract being played and the score in tricks. Colour is used to make the cards stand out and emphasise the headings. Beeps are used to inform the player when an error has been made in card selection or typing.

During play it is possible to cheat by viewing the earlier tricks and looking at the other hands. All the tricks can be claimed at any time to speed the end of games although no check is made to see if this is probable. The cards are played by entering their suit and then the rank. The computer will play your lowest card of the required suit if you press 'ENTER' or play from the same suit if you just type the rank.

After the cards have been played the score is calculated and displayed in the form of a score card for the rubber. Another hand can be played or the last hand can be rebid and replayed, but the score will not be added to the score card if this is done. There is a chance to return to the initial set up options and alter them if required, doing this does not effect the score.

Paul

CRITICISM

I play bridge quite often and this program allows me to play without finding three others to join in. The program is easy to use and the options allow practice and problem solving with strange points distributions. You must know the basic way to bid before using this program and so absolute novices will find it difficult to understand what is going on. BRIDGE PLAYER 3 plays a good game of bridge and I would recommend it to anybody who likes bridge.

Presentation 65%
Instructions not helpful to the novice.

Graphics 62%
Functional rather than decorative.

Sound 30%
Well, you don't want a tinkly tune in this sort of thing.

Playability 66%
Some things could have been done better.

Addictive qualities 60%
Bridge fans only, opposition not too hot.

Value for money 71%
Should have lastability.

Overall 70%
Best computer version yet.

AMTIX! USER CLUB NEWS

By Malcolm Harding

Welcome again to the page that refreshes the parts of user clubs other pages, and magazines, can't reach. As I've said before the user club page is here to offer advice and help to newly formed or planned organisations and allow clubs to generally sound off about anything and everything.

AMTIX! wants to hear from user clubs the length and breadth of Britain and indeed we welcome correspondence from organisations abroad as well. All you have to do is write a biography about your club and post the details to me. If you have any black and white prints of the club members and/or venue send them as well! Got the idea? Good then why aren't you writing to me this very instant?

SOLENT AMSTRAD CLUB

First off this month I am travelling south to the fair city of Southampton in Hampshire to feature the Solent Amstrad Club. Chairman, Bill Kent, tells me they meet once a month on a Sunday evening at The Newlands pub in Portswood Road, at 7.30 p m in a private room above the lounge bar, and obviously refreshments and snacks for the inner man are readily available. Sounds very well organised to me!

At present the club has 23 members, including three of the fairer sex, and new members are obviously always welcome. The whole ranger of Arnolds is catered for, with members owning CPC 464, 664, and 6128 machines as well as PCW 8256 micros. There are usually at least four machines running on any club night some with second disk drives and printers. The level of expertise ranges from the novice upwards and one member even has his own software company.

The agenda for the meetings includes demonstrations of programs such as *Caxton's Cardbox*, *Supercalc 2*, *Dr Draw*, and all the latest games programs on release, and an effort is made to answer members' queries and problems. The club has also recently started to run a beginners' course in Basic. The age of members varies from the young twenties to the late fifties but all ages are most welcome. The club tries to cater for all interests, be it games, business, graphics or whatever.

Since its formation the club has negotiated valuable discounts on software and hardware for members at several local computer shops and also buy disks in bulk, passing on the subsequent saving to members. Bill and secretary, Bob Fisher, have also started printing a monthly newsletter and hope to expand it to a full magazine when time and money permits. Sensibly the two men use the letter to advertise the date of the next meeting to members (so they don't forget) and include local snippets of news concerning the club. Send me a copy lads and I'll print snippets in AMTIX!

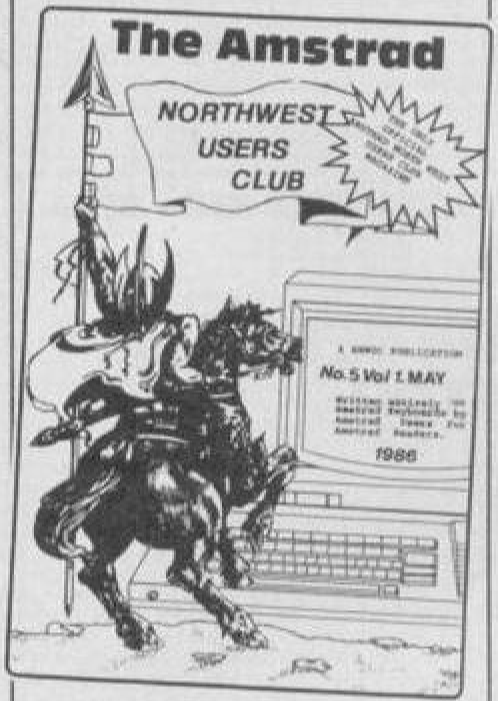
At their most recent meeting it was decided to send for a catalogue of all the Public Domain software available (CP/M) and then buy the volumes members needed and distribute same to members free of charge, except for the cost of a blank disk.

Anyone in the Southampton area wanting further details about the club or want to become members should contact either Bill at 1 Dimond Close, Bitterne Park, Southampton SO2 4LF (telephone Southampton 558075 after 5 pm) or Bob at 22 Monks Road, Netley Abbey, Southampton (telephone Southampton 453118 after 5 pm).

MORE NEWS FROM ANWUC

Dave Boucher, the secretary of the Manchester based, Amstrad North West Users' Club, has been in touch with me to confirm the takeover of the Manchester Amstrad User Club. Apparently, not every member of MAUC was in agreement with the move, initially, but after a visit to ANWUC some slight differences were resolved. In a letter to members, MAUC ex-secretary, Stephen Stanner, advised members he had been forced to allow the club to be absorbed into ANWUC on doctor's orders. He also added his ex-members would receive a monthly newsletter from ANWUC.

Dave also informed me the club could now be contacted by modem under their own section on their local T P Fido Board, 061-494-6938, 1200/75 1200/1200 300/300 2400/2400 8 bits, no parity,1 stop bit. Messages to ANWUC should be left under Area 7 and the club usually replies within 24 hours.



I'm sure Clint Heyliger, the editor of ANWUC's magazine, does not believe I read all his publication but I do! Hidden away in an article towards the front of the mag I came across a message stating an Australian Amstrad User Club called AMWEST could not obtain AMTIX! Well Clint if you contact me with their address I will see what I can do!

HELLO FROM BRIGHTON AND HOVE

George Seears, secretary of the Brighton, Hove and District Computer Club, recently dropped me a short note. The club holds meetings every two weeks and George says they regularly have a talk or demonstration on some aspect of computing. Their current membership includes novices and experts and members were interested in both hardware and software. New members are always welcome and anyone interested in joining can contact George at 19 Beach Green, Shoreham-By-Sea, Sussex BN4 5YG (telephone 0273-463111).

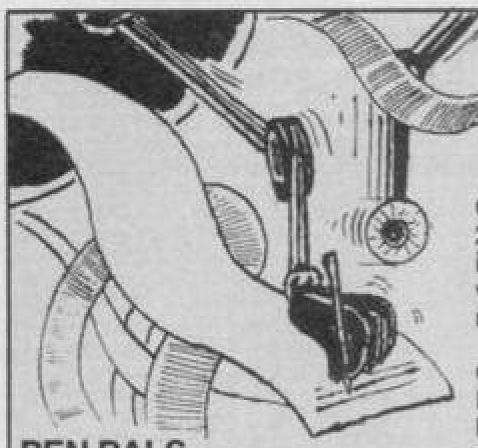
CAMELCLUB AT EXETER

An enterprising group of Arnold owners in Devon have formed a club to market their own programs. Members of the Camelclub, which is based at Wellpark, Willeys Avenue, Exeter, have free access to a software library which contains a complete Z80 assembler system, various games, erased file recovery, and so on, and there is a monthly newsletter which is packed with solid information about Amstrad micros as well as in-depth reviews of some of the more expensive and complex software.

Spokesman, John Keneally, says they are working on a scheme to publish reviews written by members on a commercial basis. They will be based on experience over a long period and so will be able to give the fullest possible analysis of the program or package. They will be available to non-members for a modest fee and should be an important source of information for anyone considering the purchase of the package.

Many of the club members also give voluntary constructive criticism on any game written by members. John feels this is an ideal way of improving a program up to a commercial standard. The club can also supply software at discount prices and provide technical and games helplines. Anyone wanting to join the club or avail themselves of the services offered can contact John at Willeys Avenue or by ringing 0392-21189.

AMTIX! USER CLUB NEWS



PEN PALS

There have been quite a few letters from readers who want pen pals who are computer minded. They include: **Hayden Mallen**, aged 13, who owns a CPC464, and lives at 80 Richmond Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 7RP. He wants to hear from girls or boys aged 13 to 14.

Alfred Hughes, aged 18, of 21 Guisborough Road, Thornaby, Cleveland TS17 8EE, wants to hear from other owners of CPC464 machines.

William Freeland, aged 16, of 15 John Humble Street, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 5QZ, would like a French pen pal who can write English.

Paul Boyall, aged 16, of 12 Main Road, Hundleby, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5LS, would like to hear from boys or girls of his age who own an Amstrad.

Eamon Murray, aged 16, of 169 Cappaghmore, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Eire, owns a CPC464 is interested in all software and would like to swop software, information, pokes etc.

Simon Martinez of 2 Vronhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool L8 8LB, also owns a 464 micro. He likes adventures and arcade games and is interested in helping others with tips and pokes, and also receiving same.

Jonathan Boyd, aged 14, of 18 Rydal Street, Frizington, Cumbria CA26 3PY, is 14 years old and owns a CPC6128. He would like to hear from anyone.

Anthony of 30 Rathvale Avenue, Ayrfield, Dublin 13, Eire, forgot to include his surname. He wants pen pals from anywhere, owns a CPC464, and is interested in programming and playing games. He would like the chance to swop ideas, tips etc. His phone number is 476458.

Robert Shepherd lives at 4 Trusthorpe Road, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincs Ln12 2LT, would like to hear from anyhone — from punks to Prime Ministers!

Finally **Mike** of 68 Silver Street, Wythall, Worcs B47 6LZ, forgot to include his surname but wants to hear from lots of people.

ENSURE YOUR REGULAR COPY OF AMTIX!

When a magazine is rising in circulation (being new, AMTIX! is doing this) and so sells out immediately, you may experience difficulty in obtaining your copy every month. So the best thing to do is place a regular order with your local newsagent, which you can do by handing him this form.

Please place me a regular monthly order for *AMTIX!* Magazine.

Name ....

Address ....

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To the Newsagent:

AMTIX! Magazine is published in the middle of every month by **Newsfield Ltd**, 1-2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ. **Tel: 0584 5851**, and distributed to the newstrade by **COMAG (08954 44055)**. Please check with the publishers if you have any difficulties in obtaining supply.

USER CLUB IN DERBY?

Phillip Mann of 18 Wingfield Drive, Chaddesden, Derby DE2 4PW, wants to know if there is a User Club in the Derby area. If there isn't he is willing to start one and would like to hear from anyone else prepared to set up a club. Get writing!

HELPING A DISABLED CLUB

William Brown of 99 Bilby Terrace, Irvine, Ayrshire, KA12 9DS, is trying to put together a compilation disk and tape and the proceeds from them will go to a club for disabled people called STAG. Bill wants to hear from anyone who can write programs. He is also prepared to do a tape to disk transfer service. All people have to do is send a disk and games (up to 10 will go on one disk) and a cheque or postal order for £2.50. Anyone who wants to write to the club for penpals should also write to him.

CHANGES AT CHRIS BRYANT'S CLUB

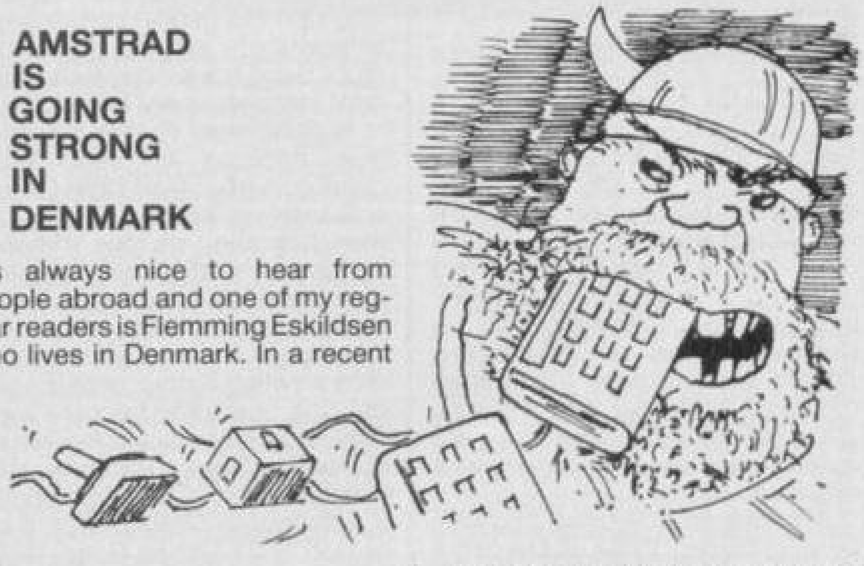
In June I featured a user club run by Chris Bryant of 11 Havenview Road, Seaton in Devon. Since then Chris has implemented a number of changes, the main one being a reduction in the price of his newsletter which comes out on average every six weeks. Its cost is now 50p per issue.

He also tells me his club is national and international and not merely confined to the Seaton area of Devon so he would like new members from anywhere and everywhere! Overseas prices are 90p per issue. Chris has also had a change of heart over his policy of not running software reviews including games. He also intends to start a regular programming feature in the newsletter and is looking for volunteer or volunteers who can do the work for him.

Anyone wanting further information should write to Chris or ring him on 0297-20456.

AMSTRAD IS GOING STRONG IN DENMARK

It's always nice to hear from people abroad and one of my regular readers is Flemming Eskildsen who lives in Denmark. In a recent letter he gave me a potted history of the success of Amstrad in his country.



Less than two years ago when Amstrad first appeared on the Danish scene few people gave it a second glance. After all, at that time the market was dominated by Commodore. They had about 50 per cent of the market, the remainder being shared by such machines as the Spectrum, Apple, IBM and the Danish PC's called Butler and Piscoline.

Thanks to a massive publicity campaign by Amstrad an d Danish importers, Dinamicro, the CPC464 took off in a big way and quickly started to eat into Commodore's share of the market. Danes were taking back their Commodore 64 to swop it for an Amstrad! Than Amstrad launched the CPC6128 and suddenly stores stopped stocking Commodores in favour of Arnolds. The CBM64 became a legend and even when Commodore fought back with the 128 their recovery was abortive.

At the beginning of this year Amstrad launched their PCW8256 and within months it had sold thousands of units. According to Flemming the Amstrad is about to become the new leader in the computer market.

Thanks for the information Flemming. Keep the news coming in and if you know any Danes who want pen pals in Britain drop me a line.

Right that's all this month. If you have any news, want a penpal, or just want to publicise your user club the address, as always, is **Malcolm Harding, AMTIX! User Club Page, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

DESIGN A LEISURE COMPLEX FOR THE YEAR 2050 AND WIN THE DEFINITIVE SQUASH OUTFIT

PLUS . . . 50 Copies of ROOM TEN for the lucky runners up!

Those ever-so-modest people at **CRL** were rightly proud of their brilliant game *Tau Ceti* and planned for the game's talented author Pete Cooke to write yet more games all tying in with the *Tau Ceti* mythos. What he did was to produce *Room Ten* which, as any Galaxy hopping man about the cosmos will tell you, is the room in any Galcorps leisure complex that is reserved for the very popular sport of low gravity Glyding which is similar in many respects to playing low gravity squash. I suppose that in this respect, *Room Ten* is a futuristic sports simulation where you play against either a human or an unforgiving computer without having to moon jump around yourself like some futuristic Johnah Barrington.

Of course, at AMTIX! Towers the leisure industry has a plethora of converts. Yes, if you're talking fitness then the wheezing cronies at AMTIX! should convince anyone of the benefits of healthy living. Uncle Malcolm finds that jogging is little too excessive for him these days but the daily bump starting of his 1956 executive bathchair seems to keep him trim enough for those occasional bursts of speed that he shows when the Pig and Ball Bearings is open and are equalled only by his speed of departure when it's his round!

Even the new reviewer, Dick Eddy, shows some athleticism in a way that would make his predecessor, Mr Liddon proud. Yes, his speed and agility in chomping food suggests that not only has he stepped very neatly into Mr Liddon's shoes as ace reviewer but also seems to be munching his way into filling Old Captain Corpulent's size 40 trousers too!

Never judge a book by its cover, however, as the sleek and racey lines of Lee 'Roger Moore' Paddon belie a man whose greatest asset must lie in his pure economy of movement. Mr Paddon has so far only been spurred into action by his need to find somewhere to live in Ludlow as his present accommodation at the Cow and Ruptured Spleen pub is expensive and, as he recounts to us, the walls and floors are crooked and the bar fills with pink hippopotami around closing time at which time he is usually carried thoughtfully to his garret. Perhaps once he's moved he will find it easier to leave his office seat a little more often.

Our resident Tech expert, Tony Clarke, doesn't believe in sport at all. His body has been designed with computing in mind with long thin streamlined fingers that cut down drag when you're typing in near endless lists of machine code into your Amstrad. Tony may not be fit but under his coaching all the computers in the office are now very healthy with the Joyces now challenging the world record for the four minute novel. All this talk of fitness and leisure must be leading somewhere and once again, the Amsters have it! *Room Ten's* producers **CRL**, like the idea of Galcorps corporation giving fitness and sport such a high profile within their organisation and the loverrly Leslie at **CRL** knows the benefits of exercise because she's very fit herself!

She's offering the definitive squash outfit comprising shirt, shorts, shoes, socks, racquet and warmed squash balls to the lucky person who designs a leisure complex for the year 2050. Not only will the lucky winner be asked by Leslie for personal details like chest, waist and shoe size but she'll also arrange a couple of free squash lessons to get you started on the path to fitness.

Not everyone will be able to become the pride of the squash courts, however, so fifty runners up will each receive a copy of the game with which to glyde from the safety of their own living room.

Commit your designs for the leisure complex of the future to a piece of paper no bigger than A4 (that's 210mm x 300mm) and send it to: **AMTIX! ROOM 10, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than 15th September.

STAINLESS STEEL

HIGH SPEED THRILLS AND SPILLS

Enjoy a good old shoot em up with Ricky Steel and his super car courtesy of MIKRO-GEN

Work is nearly complete on Mikro-Gen's latest epic, **Stainless Steel**. This game promises to raise the stakes on Amstrad graphics with its nicely drawn backgrounds and smooth scrolling. Our hero, Ricky Steel, is off to right wrongs, save civilization, and generally be a right little do-gooder. Between him and putting his feet up after a hard day's crusading are five screens of arcade action.

On the first screen, Ricky has got to get into his skimmer. You or I might have put our buggy in the garage, not Ricky, being the masochistic type, he's parked his wheels down the bottom of the street. Naturally the street is bursting at the seams with all sort of nasties, eleven to be exact. So Ricky has to leg it up the street, blazing away with the old laser rifle which he fortuitously left by the bed side. The street outside looks like any normal suburban street which has a guerilla war going on in it, with nice details such as pavements, customs checkpoints, the inevitable line of parked cars, trees and clouds. Ricky's trusty rifle is a pretty lethal piece of hardware, and can blaze away at a rare old rate in any of eight directions. But he must be careful not to blow away his own fuel barrels which float around the screen.

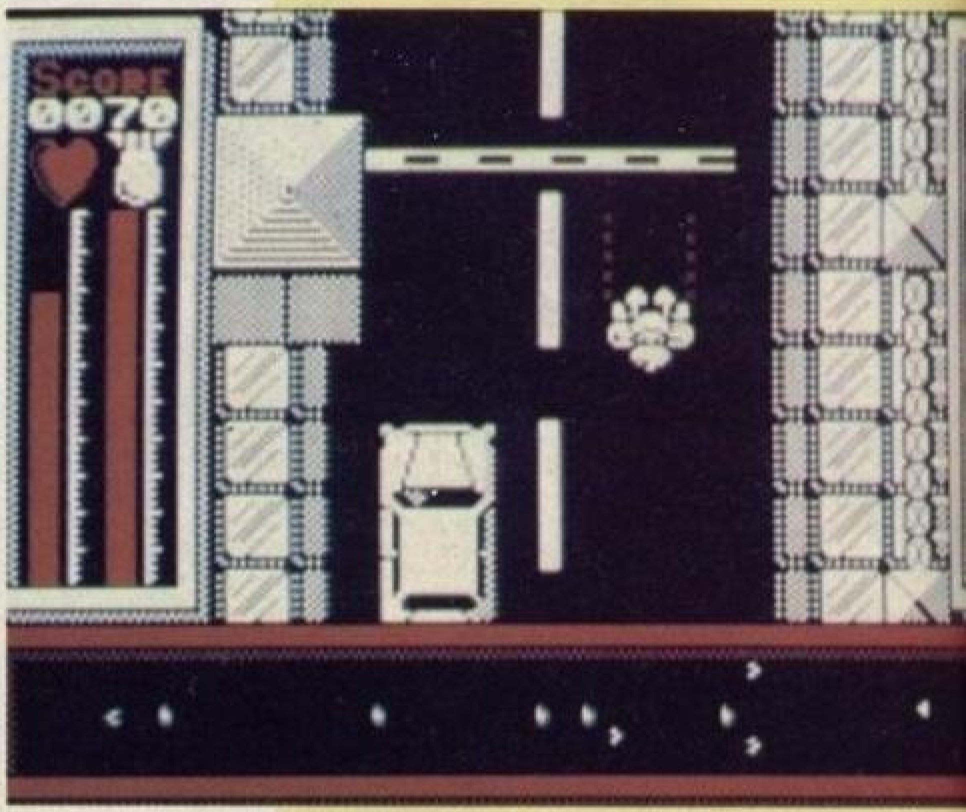
Should our hero ever make it to his motor, it's off to the desert. Now things get really tough. The skimmer can really shift, but beware, speed kills, usually when some belligerent alien hits you. Here hazards come in three classes; helicopters which dodge, rockets which don't, and the scenery which is extremely solid when you hit it at speed. So down the central channel you must go which is quite tricky, what with enemy bases stuck in the middle of it. There is a radar running the entire length of the bottom of the screen which gives you some idea of how long each level is. This gives you prior warning of aliens which can come from any direction and identifies what type they are. Another screen has Ricky taking to the waves, which is of course, merely an excuse to bomb the local shipping. This is entirely gratuitous as they neither shoot him nor ram into him, although they do have the annoying habit of submerging just as Ricky lets go with the big one. The bonus constantly counts down from 500, and should a screen take too long, the score will actually start to decrease. For the really tardy, it might be possible to come out of a screen with less points than you went in with.

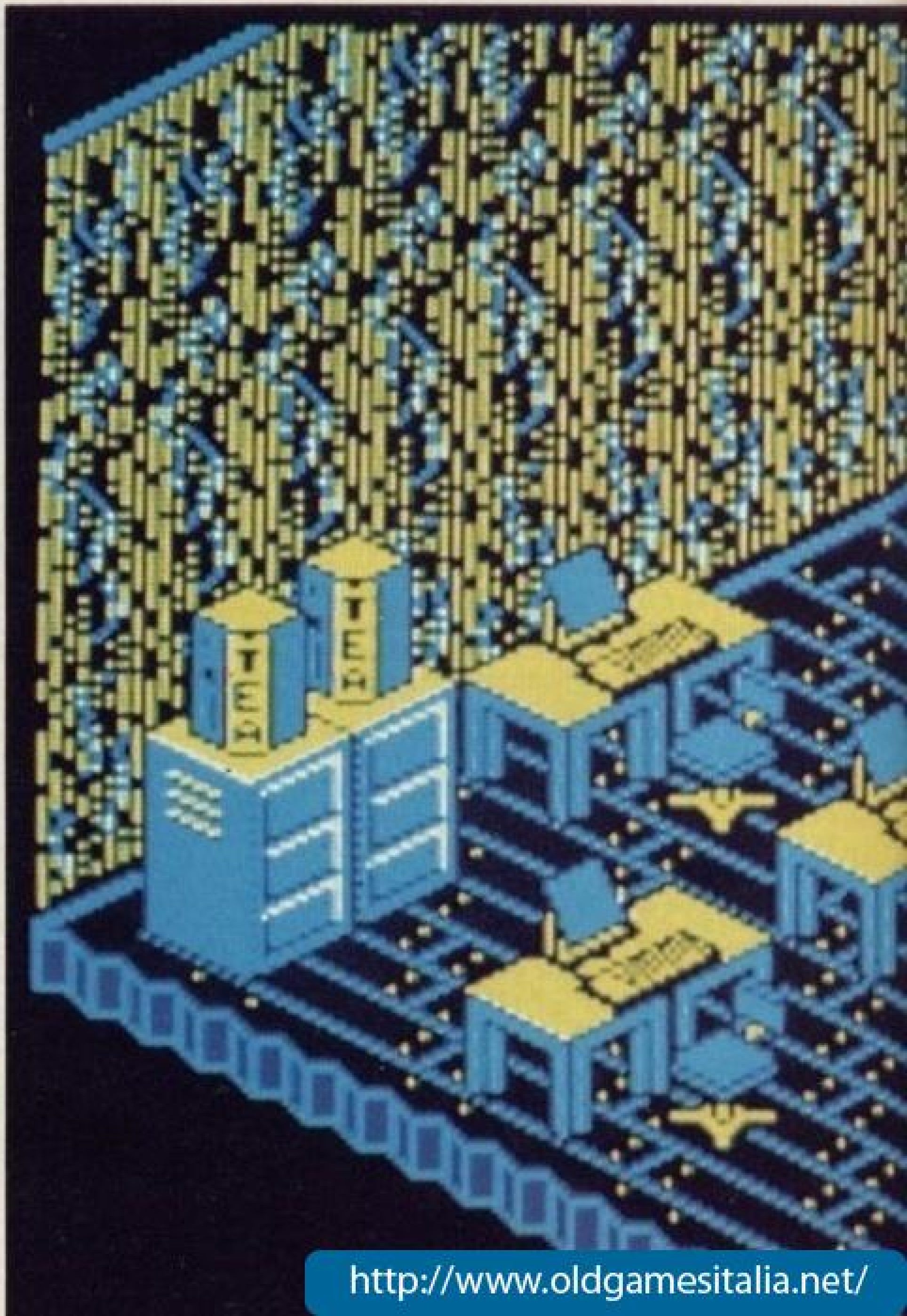
The graphics scroll very smoothly and the background whizzes down the screen as Ricky rushes around. The detail, in mode 1 is excellent, right down to the cockpits on attacking planes and the flashing light on Ricky's car. The animation, when Ricky is walking, is also good to see. At the moment, sound is limited to a few pretty standard spot FX and a rather jolly tune just after the game has loaded. At present the general opinion in the office is that the game is a little too hard. Even the usually deadly Rignall was heard to mutter 'flip that for a game of soldiers' after a particularly dismal performance, but hopefully this will be tweaked a little before the final version.

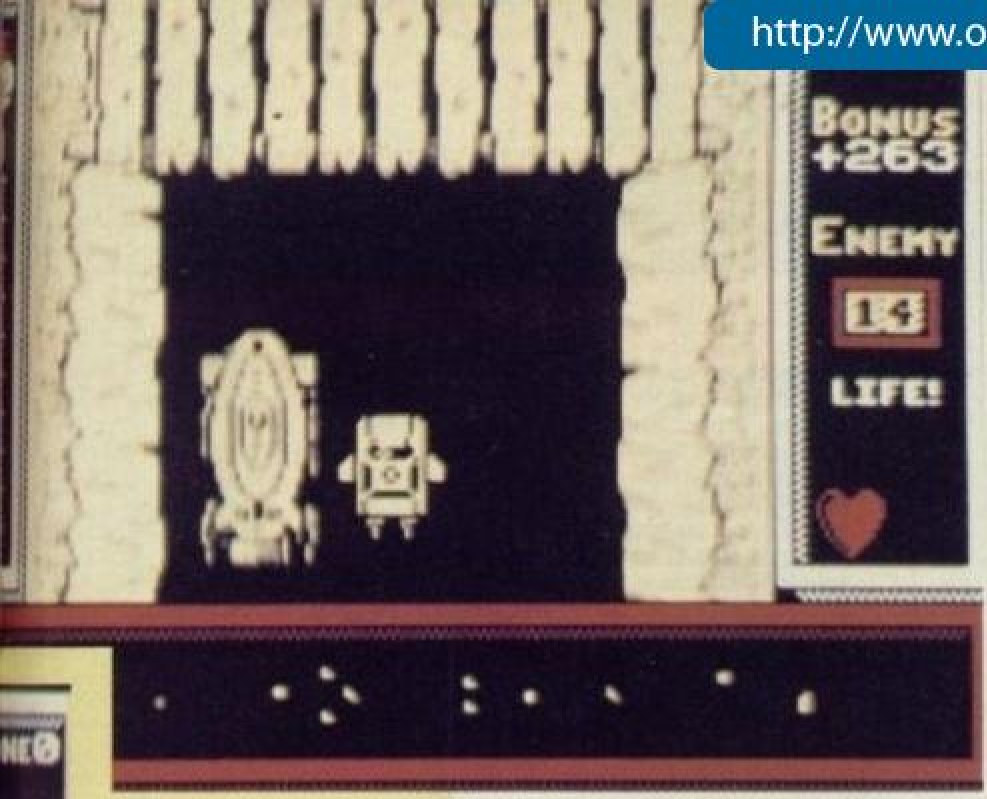
Stainless Steel looks set to be a winner with the sure fire combination of a ferocious shoot-em-up and damn good graphics.

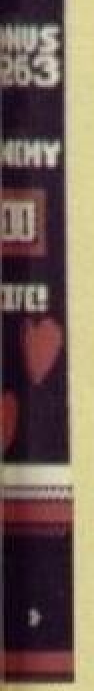
Lee Paddon

1. Our intrepid explorer encounters the first checkpoint, but luckily there's a car which might come in handy . . .









2 . . . and it does, by Jove!. Hurtling along in his mega-mobile he plans his moves carefully to fly under the bridge and avoid the nasty car all at the same time. Some people have just got all the talent.

Our Hero, Ricky Steel, has got some serious alien blasting to do, five screens to be exact, in this all action shoot-em-up. The really eye-catching graphics and smooth scrolling make this one you wont want to miss. Bombs, shields and fuel are just a few of the things you have to keep your eyes on, as well as the homicidal aliens.

Defend the ultimate weapon, big enough to blow a hole through hyper space, against the pesky andro bots. Can you survive, do you want to survive - or will you detonate the bomb, blowing you and the base to smithereens. There are puzzles to baffle you, blocks and bubbles to overcome and watch out - there's a lot of nasty drops plunging you into the very depths of the base.

NEXOR

ANNIHILATE THE ANDRO BOTS AND AVOID AN EXTRA BLACK HOLE IN SPACE

Take a mega bomb from the space nasties and save the universe, well some of it, in DESIGN DESIGN'S latest game

Since joining AMTIX! I've been hearing some dubious rumours about the gang at Design Design and their connections with Newsfield. I believe former editor, Jem Spencer's scruffy mongrel, Poopy (Or is that Poddy?) even featured in one of their games, *2112* I think, and that had something to do with one of them getting married. So when a disk was hurled at me by Uncle Lee, I thought it was time to enter into the crazy world of the Manchester Mafia.

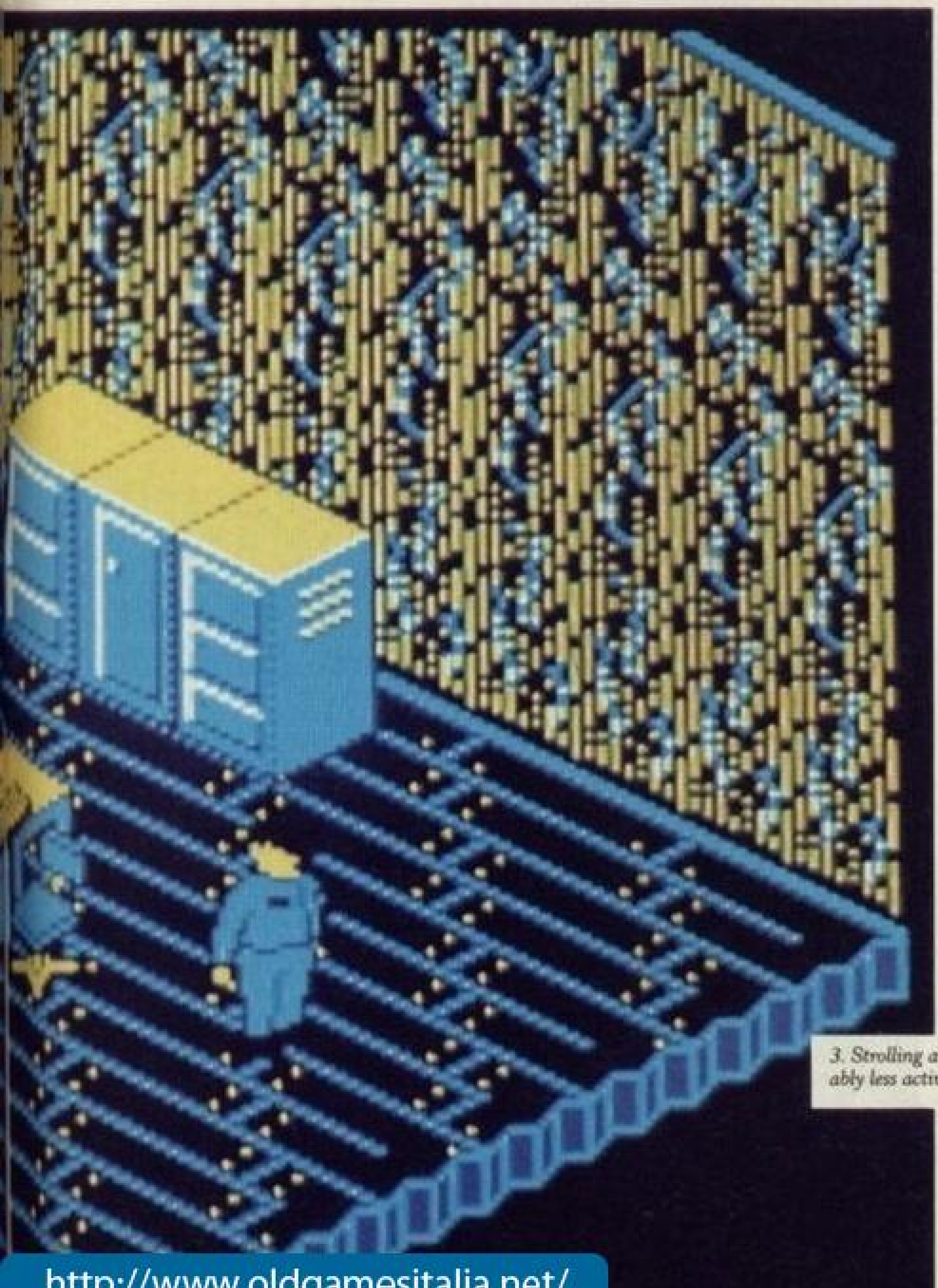
Their latest game to make it's debut onto the market is called **Nexor** and follows the adventures of the sole survivor of a small planet who has been given the important task of defending Nexor, the ultimate weapon devised to make a huge hyperspace link between the **Orion Stronghold** and the mighty truculent **Andromidan** forces.

As anyone who has had to guard a mega weapon will tell you, there are always some devious maniacal nasties who want to get their filthy paws on such a powerful doobrie. In this case it is the evil Andro bots, gasp!, shock!, horror!. The Nexor device consists of five parts (there are two of each in the complex) and neither they nor their blueprints must fall into enemy hands — the trouble is you don't know where they are either! Problems, problems. To make things even worse the only way off this hell pit is by an ever-so-useful **Matter Transference Beam** which would transfer you to the nearest earth ship. Unfortunately it's not working, What you need to do is to find a replacement, sounds easy huh?

Er, no sorry it's not quite that easy for if everything else fails there's always the self-destruct system which will blow you and the complex to smitherines. Remember those pesky Andro bots? I hope so because as soon as the radiation falls they'll be back. Ruddy clockwork dustbins!

Graham Stafford, who's written the game, thinks the players will need skill and agility to come out on tops. The game will eventually contain one hundred and fifty rooms, all shown in colourful 3D perspective and will feature a hero who scampers around in a rather jovial fashion. The game, duplicating services willing, is due for release any time now and should be reviewed next month.

RICHARD EDDY



3. Strolling around in the office, but it is noticeably less active than the AMTIX! menagerie.

TIR NA NOG

A NEOLITHIC ARCADE ADVENTURE

In this old favourite from GARGOYLE GAMES, you have to reassemble and reactivate the seal and avoid the nasty monkeys

Back in the age when fossils fuels were the latest thing in reseach and development, there was Cuchulainn. Cuchulainn is, or rather was, a hero. **Tir Na Nog** chronicles his very first adventure as he attempts to locate, re-unite and then activate the constituent parts of a powerful Seal. To do this he must wander across forboding landscapes, explore underground complexes and survive the many hazards along the way. For not all you will meet are friendly in **Tir Na Nog**.

The most common adversary in this ancient world are the Sidhe. These are simple but strong ape-like servants of some greater power and prowl the land in their never ending quest to end the existence of heroes such as yourself. Yet what does Cuchulainn have to protect him from such horrors? The simple answer is very little indeed. Any weapons must be discovered and acquired during the journey. And even then, the effectiveness of any particular weapon cannot be guaranteed against certain creatures. Yet all from a mace to a pin are supposed to have their uses sooner or later.

What a strange world this is.

Perhaps this strangeness is only matched by its beauty and technical excellence. For Cuchulainn is a computer giant and he walks with giant strides, his long hair flowing in the wind. In the background there may be a castle silhouetted against the sky, ravens flying about its battlements or a volcano puffing clouds of heated smoke into the air. Despite such obvious landmarks, it is very easy to become lost in the maze of roads and pathways available to Cuchulainn. This is because our hero may only walk from left to right. To move **into** or **out of** the screen when a road becomes available in that direction, the player must first toggle the screen view (in any of four directions) until the new route presents itself horizontally across the screen. This is complicated at first and can lead to confusion. After playing a while, it becomes easy enough.

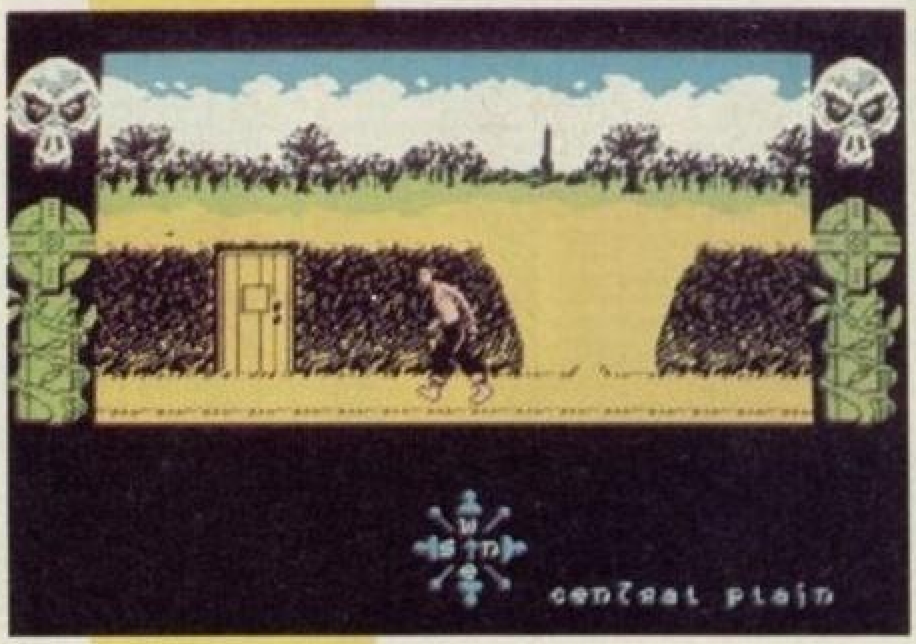
There are still a lot of roads however, and the presence of a compass in the lower part of the screen is only a rough aide. This is a true graphic adventure and you will require a pen and paper along with a modicum of cartographical expertise if you are to progress very far. The game is almost finished. A couple of bugs need to be eliminated before the final version is released. The game has long been considered a classic on other micros and its appearance on the Amstrad is long overdue. Next month, we should be able to bring you a full review and let you know whether it has been worth the wait. Keep you fingers crossed.

Sean Masterson

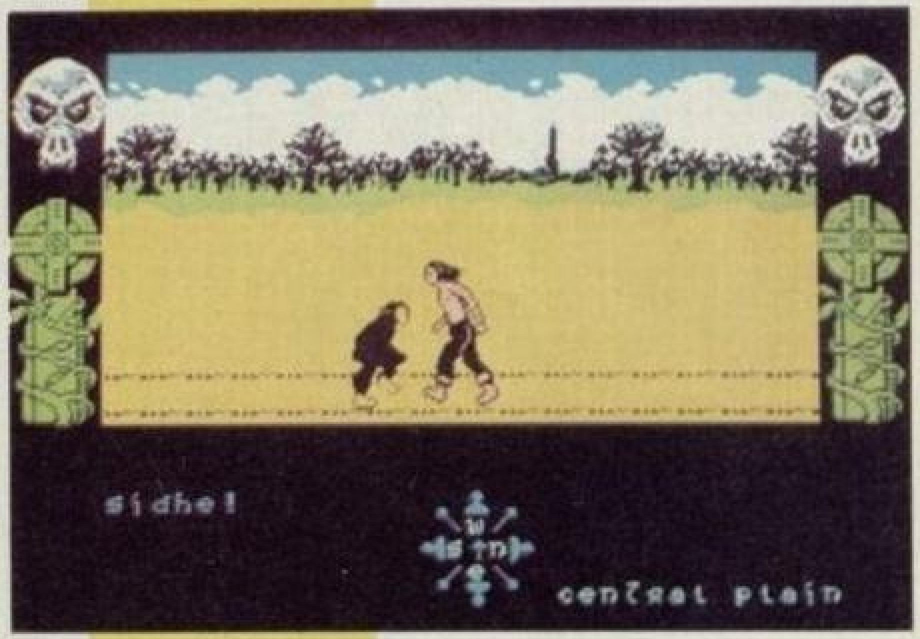
Reassemble and reactivate the seal is what it's all about in this neolithic arcade adventure. There are Sidhe monkeys to be avoided at all costs, and generally there are lots of things to be picked up and endless horizons to be explored (it's a rather large map).

Bombs away with DEACTIVATORS. A version of Pass The Parcel where the bombs have to be got out of the building as quickly as possible. So hurl the bomb through the window double quick. This game combines amusing, pretty graphics with an evil strategy game, which ranges from tricky at level one to utterly impossible on level three. Usually there is only one route round the maze to complete the level - your task is to find it or perish.

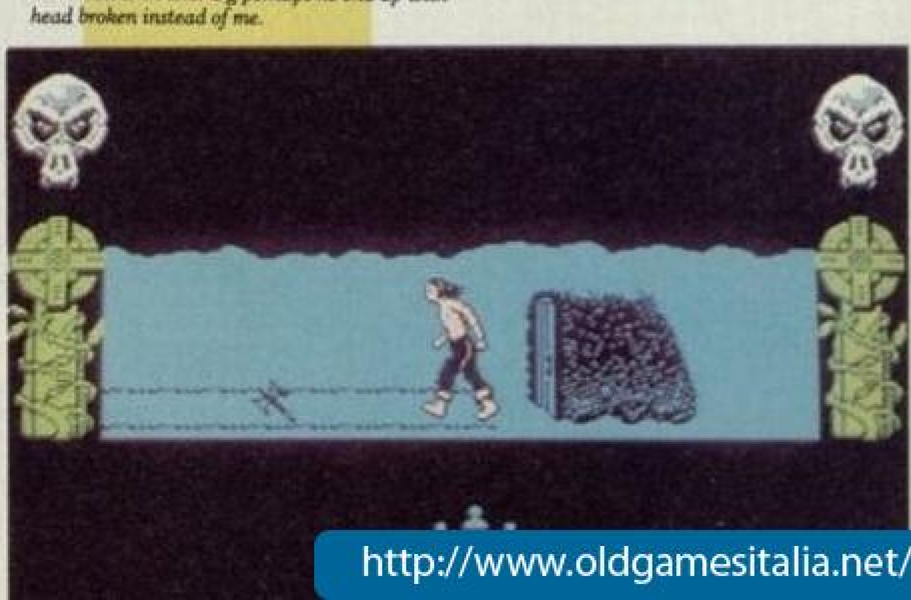
4. Galumphing around the place, our hero Cuchulainn, with the big problem — he's back in the stone age.

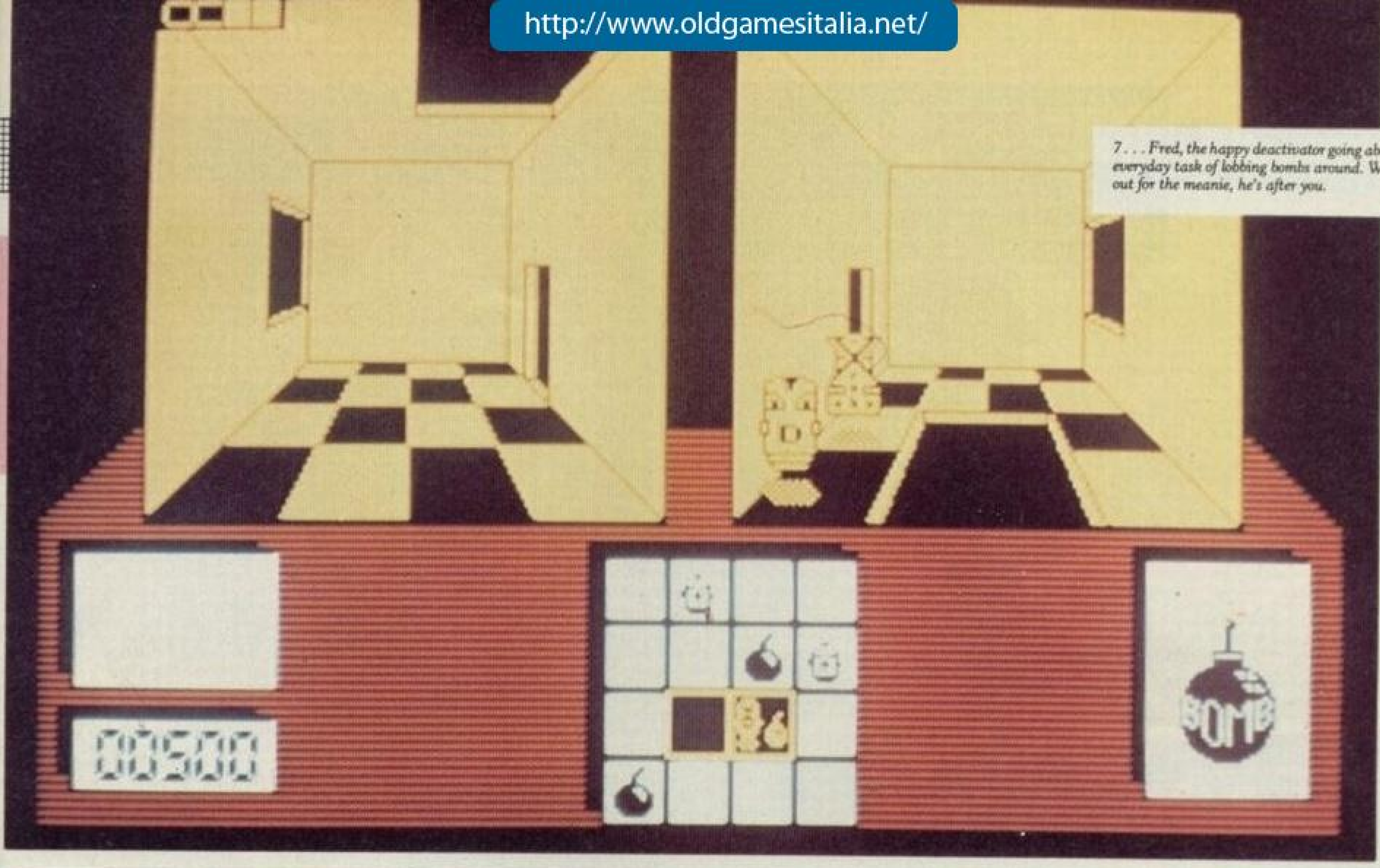


5 . . . Here, he is about to make an encounter of the primate-ive kind. Don't monkey with this guy, he'll have you swinging in the trees in no time.



6 . . . Ug axe (scratches head), Ug, hit monkey over head with axe. Ug perhaps he end up with head broken instead of me.





7 . . . Fred, the happy deactivator going about his everyday task of lobbing bombs around. Watch out for the meanie, he's after you.

DEACTIVATORS

YOUR MISSION IS TO CLEAR THE BUILDING OF BOMBS IN DOUBLE QUICK TIME

Pretty graphics and an evil strategy game from ARIOLASOFT

Deep in the heart of trendy Covent Garden something is stirring at Ariolasoft. Small but perfectly formed bondage freak, Amanda Barry (well, it makes a change from gorgeous pouting) requested the company of assorted hacks from Newsfield, so, off we dutifully trotted. The game on show was **Deactivators**, a game which is difficult to pigeon hole, but certainly shows promise.

It's a sort of three dimensional version of the hoary old favourite *Danger UXB* where the player has to dash around a screen doing a spot of bomb disposal.

The action takes place in a two dimensional grid of rooms. Some of them connected by doors and some by lifts. Scattered around the grid are a number of bombs. These have to be hurled out of the windows (if anyone just happens to be passing, it's tough). The windows, naturally enough, are situated on the outer vertical sides of the grid, so the bombs have to be transported there. Unfortunately, not all the rooms are connected, so, three droids are supplied to do the job. The bomb has to be passed from one droid to another by lobbing it through some of the internal windows. Lobbing the bombs is a fun, if somewhat tricky passtime; the game is partially icon driven, and by selecting the throw icon, a window is displayed which allows the angle, the bomb is thrown, to be selected. With a bit of luck, the bomb then hurtles gracefully through the window to where a fellow droid is waiting to take the bomb on its way.

So you thought that was slick — that's just the start! Each room has a different level of gravity due to some quirk in Einstein's special theory of games designing. This makes chucking bombs around a little more tricky, as the angle required changes with the level of gravity.

Yet another dimension of the game is the central computer, which has naturally enough been sabotaged — probably given someone a six figure gas bill. Sundry circuit boards have been scattered around the place, these have to be replaced in the computer in order to open up various bits of the maze.

What it all means is that on every level there is a solution, but probably only one. A method of using the droid must be worked out, and obviously they must be used in co-operation. First the computer must be stuck together and then the bombs have to be gradually moved to the outside of the building. Transfer between droids is very easily done using the little icon menu. This also allows the player to look at all the rooms to see what they contain.

As if all the cerebral stuff wasn't enough, there's even some manic enemy meanie droids out to get you. These are pretty dumb as robots go and can usually be easily avoided, but they add that little bit of adrenalin to the game. Oh yes, another little wrinkle to be watched for is that if a bomb is lobbed and it hits a circuit board, it's kaboom time, the bomb, circuit board, room, and any droids therein go up in smoke, and with it, more than likely, your chance of finishing the level. And of course, there's always the chance a bomb will start ticking anyway.

Lee Paddon

TEMPEST

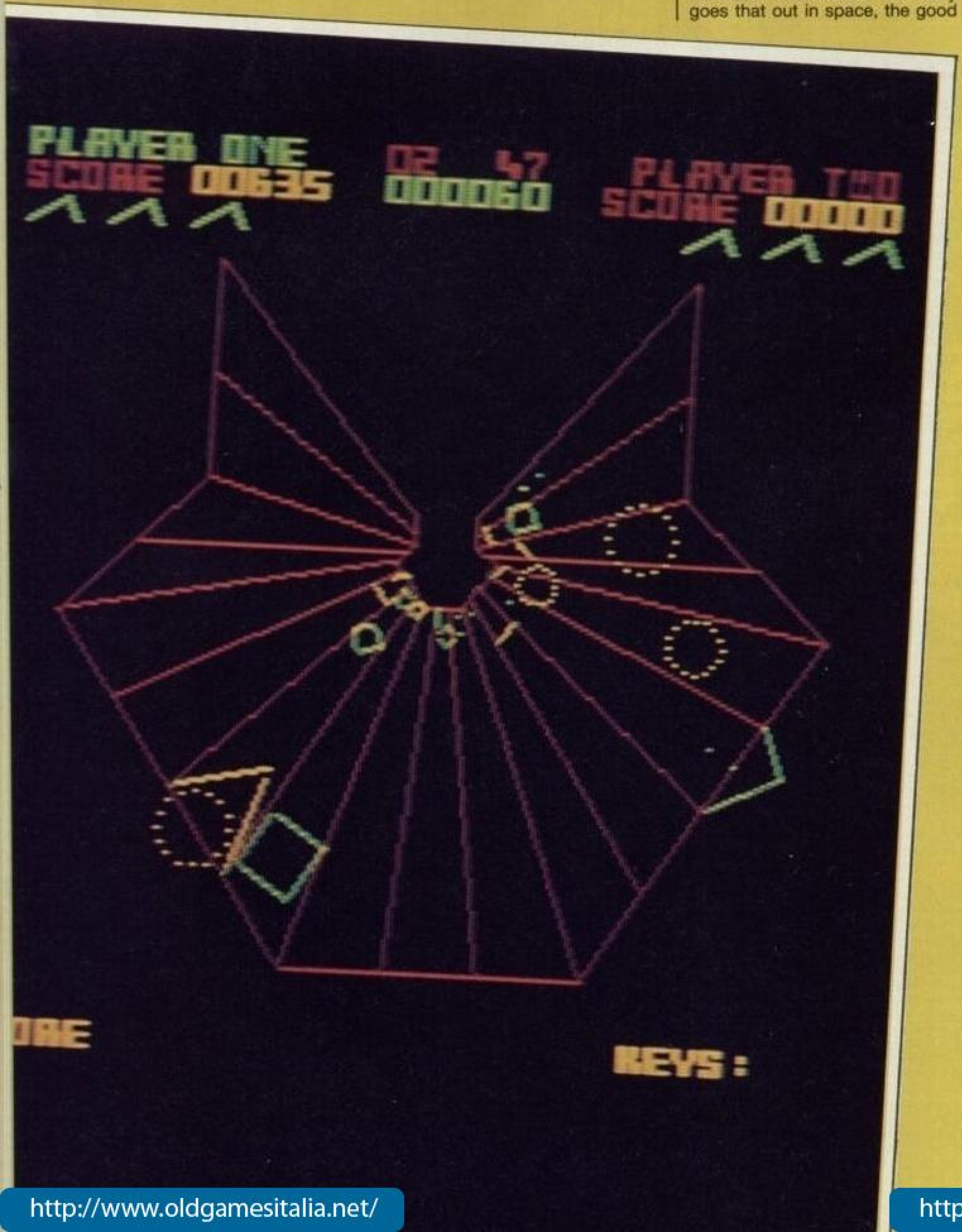
Electric Dreams, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
Programmer: David Pridmore

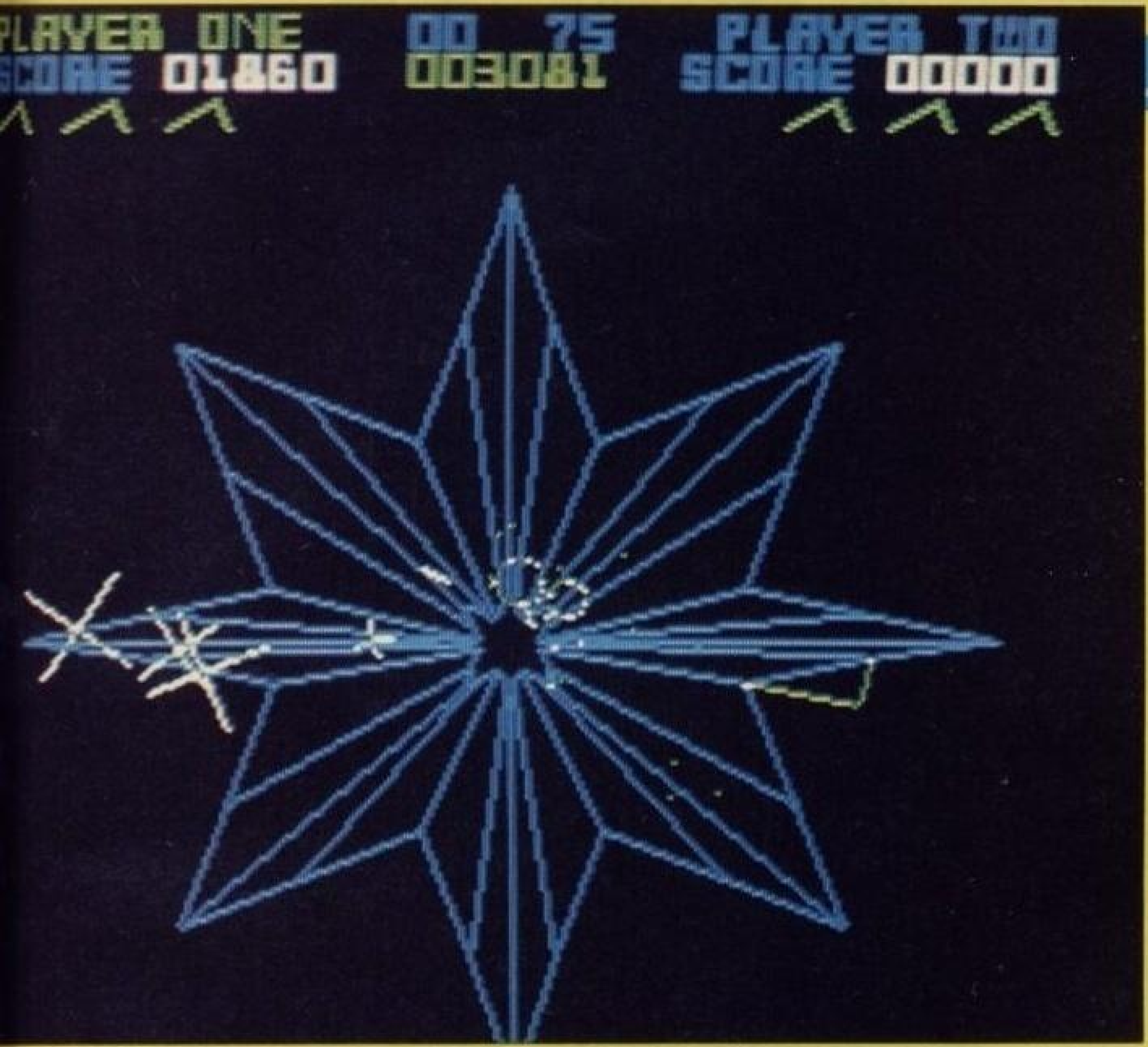
Turn out the lights, plug the Arnold into the stereo, wack in *Tempest*. This is all you need to do to have a do it yourself arcade. It was always easy to find a Tempest machine in the arcades— you just followed the most deafening sound until you came to it. Electric Dreams has recreated all the sound and fury of the arcade original in this, the official micro version. Be the envy of Commodore and Spectrum owners, for the moment, this won't appear on other machines. Even if it does, the stereo sound effects — which really need an external amplifier to be fully appreciated — will take some beating. If anyone has been asleep for the last five years, or has never set foot in an arcade, *Tempest* is a game of mindless destruction. The story goes that out in space, the good old hyperspatial wireways have got a bit infested with marauding aliens. This makes using the old wireways a bit tricky. A spaceship on it's way between point A and point B might well end up in point C. This isn't too bad unless point C just happens to be in the middle of a nice hot sun and gives the passengers the sort of sun tan they're not likely to forget in a hurry.

So off you go to clean up all 99 wireways to make the universe safe. Dave Pridmore, the programmer has done his best to produce an authentic version. This starts with the way the screen has been turned on its side. The overall size of the screen is the same, it is just narrower and taller. One or two players can play, and before play starts, the starting screen can be selected. It is probably best here to try to select a sequence which will give some really nasty screens at the start, at low level, and some nice looking screens later on when the going starts to get rough. After the completion of every screen, the level increases one level, and the meanies become more plentiful. Your view of the game is looking down the wireway, which disappears in true perspective into the inky blackness of space. Your zapper runs around the lanes of the wireways raining down a hail of death on the swarming meanies coming up from below. If things get really tough, there's always the ultimate deterrent, the super zapper.

This produces a pulse of of powerful electricity across the whole width of the wireway, sweeping all meanies before it — including those which have made it to the top of the wireway. Whilst this seems like an easy way out, there are two problems: you only get one super zapper per screen, they can't be saved from screen to screen if you don't use it, and using it makes any surviving meanies real mad! Use it only if in desperate straights or to finish off a few meanies hanging around at the end of a screen.

Meanies come in lots of different flavours: Fuse Balls to start off with, these are fairly slow things which amble up the wireway and are sitting ducks. Later on though, they become one of your deadliest threats. They become fast, and usually are the leading element of a wave of meanies travelling up one track. When they reach the top, they just sit there blocking the track. Next there are Tankers. These come in two varieties: fuse ball tankers and walker tankers. These lumbering square objects are tricky to dispose of. If you just zip around firing at random, just hitting these guys with one bullet will release its cargo, and thus





more problems. The best way is to let go with a real burst at these things and thus exterminate the cargo at the same time.

The walkers or fuzz balls released aren't too much of a problem, but still get in the way, and it can get **very** confusing at high levels. The fuzz balls released are not of the normal variety, they spin from lane to lane very fast, slowly working their way towards you. These meanies are pretty bad news if they reach the top. If a tanker makes it to the top of the expressway. Some are dummy tankers and just expire when they get to the top. But if a walker tanker gets to the top, the walkers stomp round the edge of the wireway. This makes life very tough, you can only move your zapper past them when they are in mid stride between tow lanes of the express way.

If the fuse balls get to the top, then it's hit the zapper time, or there'll be a fuse ball with your number on it, unless you get off a lucky shot, or they hit a static fuse ball. Next come Walkers. These flop from one lane to the next, very slowly climbing their way up. No problem unless they reach the rim. At around about level 12 you meet the Spikers. Just as you think you are getting the hang of it, then these guys start turning up. These are frighteningly fast as they belt up a track. Don't be on the end when they reach the top, and they can leave a nasty when they get there before sinking into oblivion.

Shorters are cunningly disguised the same colour as the wireway, these fast and deadly meanies will short circuit one lane of the wireway, thus cutting you off from one side of the screen. The trouble is, walkers and fuse balls have no trouble moving across shorted tracks.

Although the game gives a keyboard and joystick option, go for the keyboard every time, there just isn't the accuracy needed on the joystick to be able to dispatch the endless waves of nasties. At around about level 14 or so, you've got the full orchestra of all the nasties just described. You've got lots of them, and they don't hang about. Here, the program has trouble coping and everything slows down a bit. It's vital here to pick your shots and make every bullet count it you want to get through. Just the sheer quantity of muck thrown up by all the explosions makes it very difficult to spot what is going on at the far end of the wireway, and thus anticipate threats.

At the end of a game, there is a re-start feature which allows you to re-start the game four levels back from where you finished. This means you don't have to go through the boredom of all the easy screens again — just press the enter key quickly after the game finishes.

CRITICISM

1 **There's no doubt that although this sort of thing is not more sophisticated than circular space invaders, it's about the most addictive thing I've played for a long time. The speed, the noise, the senseless destruction — it's all here. This is one of the most faithful adaptions of an arcade machine I've seen — and they've chosen a great game to convert. So don't let's have any more winging programmers going on about how long it takes to move things on the Amstrad's 16k machine, this game shows just what the good ol' Arnold is capable of. I'm not sure if I prefer this to** Spindizzy **as the No.1 Amstrad game. This certainly grabs you quicker, and with a 100 different screens, it holds your attention.**

2 Some arcade games are licensed, produced for the home computer and . . . phut it flops!! They are bought by the faithful arcade players who find them to be nothing like the real thing. *Tempest* comes on a par with *Moon Cresta* for faithfully reproducing the original. It's all there, the colours, the sounds and the action. I would only suggest not to use a joystick and you'll be tuned into one of the most addictive of the old arcade originals that proves that old doesn't mean rubbish!

3 *Having never seen or played* **Tempest** *in the arcades I was a bit disenchanted by the likes of Lee and Tony zapping their way through countless screens, which all looked far too difficult for me — an ardent arcade adventurer. Before long I was press-ganged into clutching the joystick and battling it out with the alien hoards, and to my astonishment I was rather good at it. I am now firmly addicted to this excellent game, it has the magnificent combination of smooth graphics, playability and great sound, just trying wiring it up to 50 watt speakers, it'll freak your granny!. If you have never even heard of* **Tempest** *before get it now, it's the best arcade style game that I have played yet.*

Presentation 90%
Neat options, pity you can't change skill levels.

Graphics 93%
Fast and furious.

Sound 92%
Great tune, amazing sound effects.

Playability 96%
Just sit down and blast away.

Addictive qualities 95%
Just can't put it down.

Value for money 91%
Not cheap, but then again, not nasty.

Overall 92%
Great conversion of old friend from the arcades.

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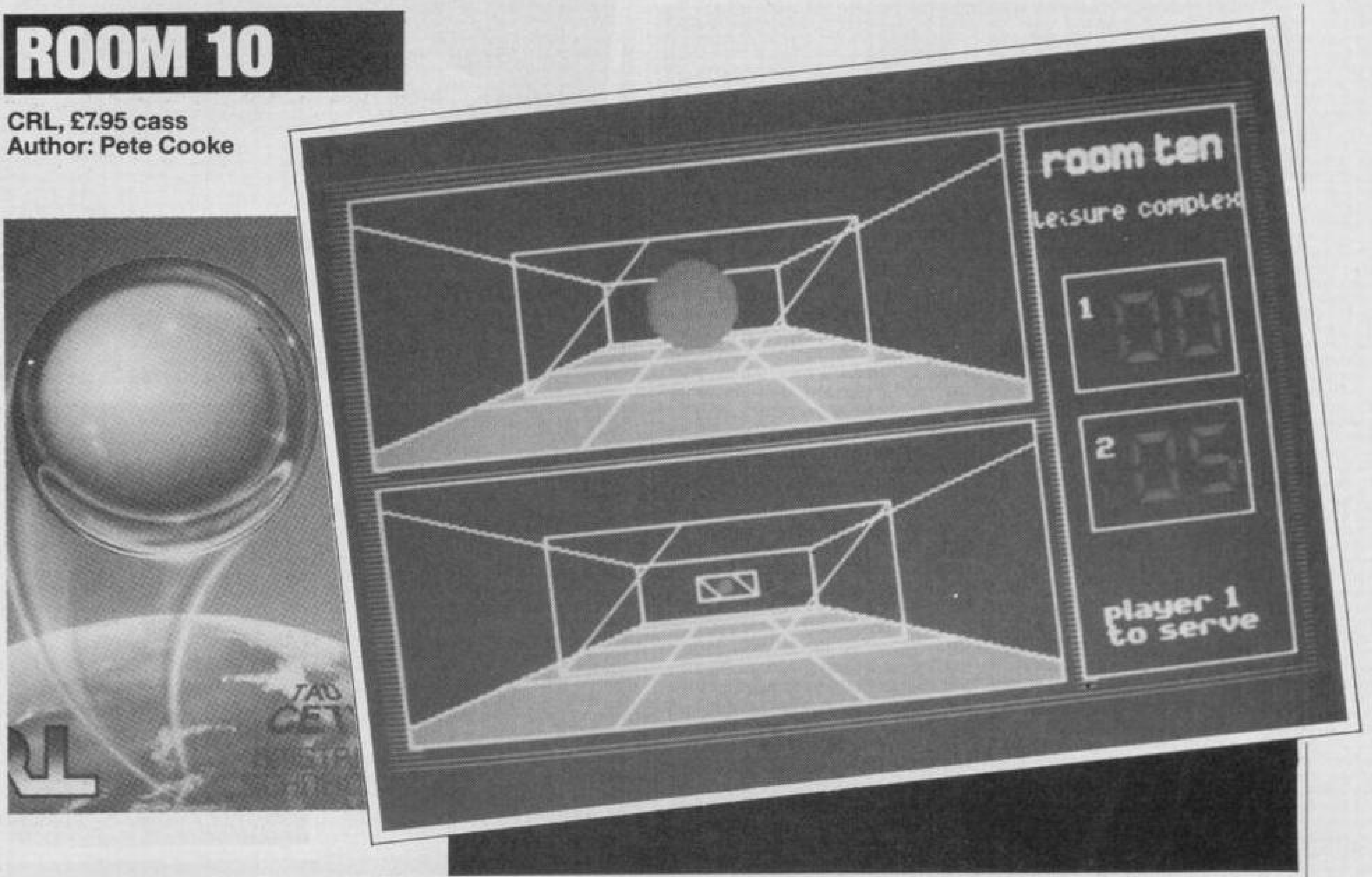
ROOM 10

CRL, £7.95 cass
Author: Pete Cooke



Pete Cooke first shot to software stardom after the gob smacking *Tau Ceti*. So this, his next game has been eagerly awaited.

Whilst *Tau Ceti* drew its inspiration from *Elite*, for this game, Mr. Cooke has dug slightly deeper into the history of software for inspiration. *Room Ten* reminds you of no lesser game than Pong, the game that started the whole computer boom in the heady days of 1976.

The object of the game is very simply to return a ball coming at you down a room. The ball bounces off the ceiling, floor and walls. Your bat is fairly large, covering about a ninth of the end wall at any time. The problem is, the bat moves slowly, so to get bat to hit ball, the player must get a pretty accurate idea where the ball is going as soon as it leaves the opponent's bat.

Richard — **CRITICISM**

Expecting a lot after TAU CETI I plonked this into my Amstrad cassette with glee, but about a minute after it had loaded I soon saw that disappointment was the order of the day. It's quite a nice idea, the two player bit and all, but really it's an absolutely mind-numbingly boring game. Plink . . . plonk . . . plink . . . after a couple of games advanced stages of rigor mortis set in and I switched it off. Thankfully I didn't buy the game — at eight quid it's an unmitigated rip-off and even at two quid it wouldn't be worth the time of day. The graphics are average, the sound dire and really it only has good presentation going for it.

Paul — **CRITICISM**

No doubt about it, this game could have livened up many a dull evening. A crisp combination of simple but effective ideas add up to an addictive and challenging game. The detailed graphics make for exciting play which really comes into its own once played against a human opponent. However, there is no excuse for the price tag. At the two pound mark, CRL would have had a respectable budget game to keep the coffers full. As it is, they will probably try to make the thing on the basis of it being a TAU CETI spin off. That will upset a lot of buyers. It's a shame.

You see the game through your transparent bat. So as you move the bat, the whole perspective of the room changes. You can also see the position of your opponent's bat down the far end of the room. The screen is split in two, the bottom half shows the view from one end of the room, the top half, the other player's eye view. The floor has a crosshatch design on it to give you some idea of the height and position of your bat.

Like Pong, the trajectory of the ball after you hit it depends on two things: the part of the bat the ball hits and the angle of the ball when it hits. The trick is to try to aim the ball either into a corner (especially if the opponent's bat is in the other corner) or just try to confuse the opponent by getting the ball to bounce a lot, and thus make him go the wrong way.

Lee — **CRITICISM**

Yeah, so it's a nice game. Played against a friend, this game will provide a great deal of fun. To play well, you have really got to stay on the ball the whole time, trying to suss out as quickly as possible where the ball is going. But £7.95 is really a bit steep for what is after all just another ball and paddle game — albeit a very nice one. All the options are a nice bit of gloss, and the game itself is nicely designed to be playable — but only just. If this had come out on a budget label, I'd have been right behind it, but at this price, it simply doesn't offer enough.

You score five points every time you get the ball to hit the opponent's wall. The first player to get 35 points wins. It is a fairly simple Pong/tennis game. On top of the basic game, there are a large number of options such as one and two player, vary the speed of the ball, the ability of the computer opponent, and you can even change the colour scheme and the language of the instructions! Not just the usual Terran languages, but the odd rather obscure dialect of hydran or cetan.

Presentation 70%
Lots of nice options.

Graphics 56%
Good perspective effects and smooth movement.

Sound 28%
Not much at all.

Playability 60%
If you've played Pong, this is easy to pick up.

Addictive qualities 57%
Can be compulsive with two players.

Value for money 39%
Not a tenner's worth.

Overall 43%
Nice game, shame about the price.

QABBALAH

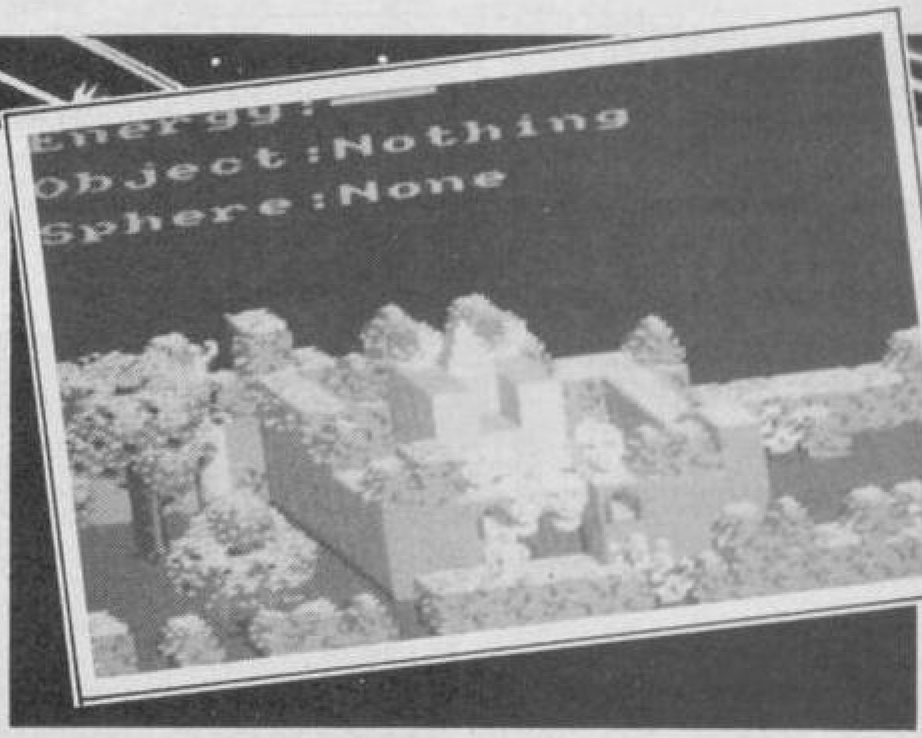
Amsoft, £9.95 cassette

In *Qabbalah* you take the part of an aspiring accolyte of the ancient Hebrew esoteric doctrine of the same name. You seek the ultimate truth and the only way to achieve this is to undertake a quest that will traverse backwards along the paths of the Tree Of Life. There are many paths that lead here but in this game your route has been pre-ordained by higher powers. Each part of the game has objects that are hidden from view, crammed into corners or hidden in houses which must be collected before attaining the sphere for that section.

Once loaded a choice must be made of which of the three levels of difficulty you want to attempt before starting. The screen shows the present level of the cowled crusader's energy which depletes if the merry monk accidentally wanders into one of the negative forces that populate the pathways and, needless to say, if the energy level becomes zero the quest has failed and being proved to be unworthy of true enlightenment, death comes swiftly. These negative forces are represented by skeletal skulls some of which potter gently around the screen and mimic the monks movements by chasing around after him whilst other, less nimble nasties looking very much like more skulls or flowering bushes will just sit around waiting for the adventurous acolyte to wander into them. Both the static skulls and the fatal flora will deplete energy if touched.

Movement is by joystick or keyboard with the usual four directions being supplemented by space or fire which is used to climb the various rocks, trees and even leaping the walls into houses that are dotted around. Some houses have the very Western luxury of swimming pools. A quick dip in one of these and your character is lost from sight and will start to loose energy so get out quickly. The majority of the game is spent with the priest pottering out of sight to search for an object, whether it be scampering along the side of a wall, climbing conifers or sub aqua searching and if contact should be made with a nastie during one of these exploratory expeditions then a nasty beeping will draw attention to the fact that the priest is being purged of energy.

To achieve true enlightenment, ten spheres must be attained by collecting the necessary objects in each level before being awarded each sphere.


Energy:
Object:Nothing
Sphere:None

Lee

CRITICISM

Amsoft once again have produced a piece of software that, although it benefits from being under the umbrella of a large organisation, comes out as being a game that no-one in their right senses will beat a path to buy. The graphics are colourful with a respectable 3D effect but the game is uninspiring and dull to play. The objects that you must collect are so well hidden that, after forty minutes of fruitless and objectless play, I decided to give up. I think that most people will do the same and find something more interesting to do with their time.

Presentation 50%
Nice inlay, shame about the game.

Graphics 10%
Some of the nastiest yet.

Sound 20%
The odd sort of squelchy bit.

Playability 30%
There's probably a game in there somewhere.

Addictive qualities 15%
O.K. if you like that sort of thing.

Value for money 15%
Steep at half the price.

Overall 15%
Really nasty.

TRASHMAN

Virgin Games, £7.95 cass
Joystick or keys

Away from blasting aliens and saving the universe in general, let us return to everyday life at Montague Road where Fred Scrunge is still collecting the bins. In this Spectrum conversion from Virgin our hero, *Trashman*, has to collect up all the dustbins from the various streets and deposit them in the back of the Trash Van. The object of the game is to empty all the dustbins into the Trash Van which slowly moves up the road, having emptied a bin, *Trashman* must then return the bin to it's proper place.

Now, you must be a good *Trashman*, if you wander onto the freshly mown lawns your bonus points disappear rapidly, but you can increase these points by performing tasks for the householders, your score is also increased every time you empty a trashcan. Hazzards plague the life of our Mr Scrunge; not only does he have to avoid the monstrous roads infested with all sorts of death wielding vehicles but householders leave their dogs run wild, and often Fred will cry, 'Ouch, scat before I bite YOUR leg off!'

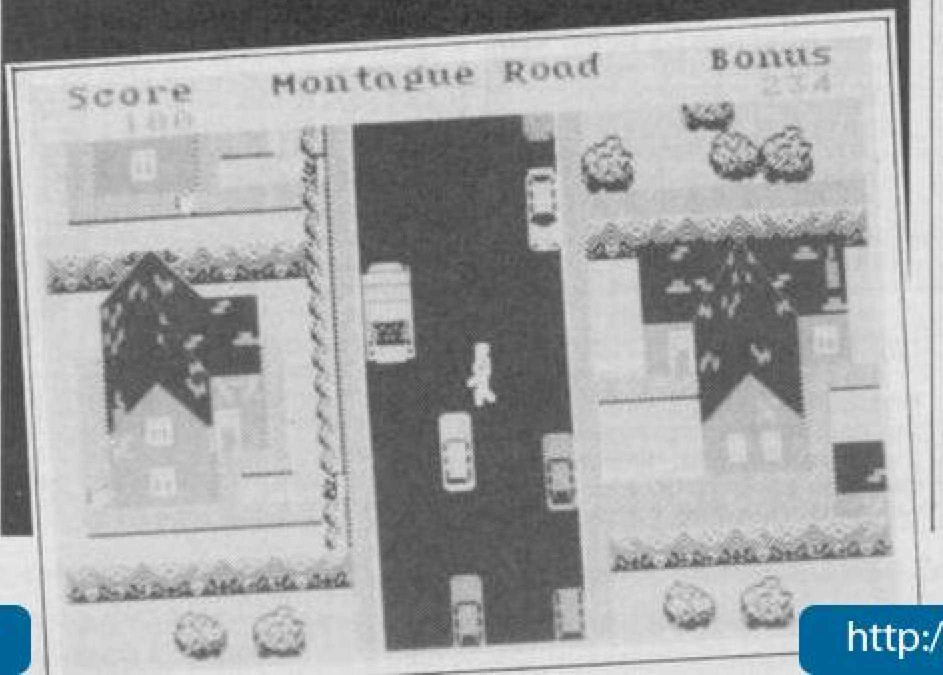
The screen display is of a bird's eye view of a well-to-do neighbourhood, complete with road and parked Porsches, to progress form street to street requires the collection of six dustbins. On route he may find pubs and cafes, only remember not to drink too much, we don't want Fred had up for drunk in charge of a trashcan.

The game may take a long time mainly because Fred hobbles quite slowly when carrying a trashcan, and can often be seen scurrying after a rapidly disappearing Trash Van. Movement on the screen is controlled via joystick or keys and when Fred reaches the top of the screen it flicks to another location. Are you trashy enough to play this game?.

Anthony

CRITICISM

What a touch of nostalgia! I had truly forgotten how bad this game really was when it first came out on the Spectrum (yeecchh!). Really this game doesn't even begin to compete with any of the budget games and should have been left in the archives. My only real comment is that the title says it all!



Paul

CRITICISM

Let's face it, TRASHMAN is a pretty old game, and this is quite evident from the style of graphics and the slow, repetitive game play. If you have seen this on the Spectrum, a few years ago, you'll realise that it hasn't improved much and the humorous quips are not so funny anymore. At £7.95 this game is still overpriced and is more deserving of a budget title.

Presentation 50%
Nowt wrong with it.

Graphics 55%
Functional rather than decorative.

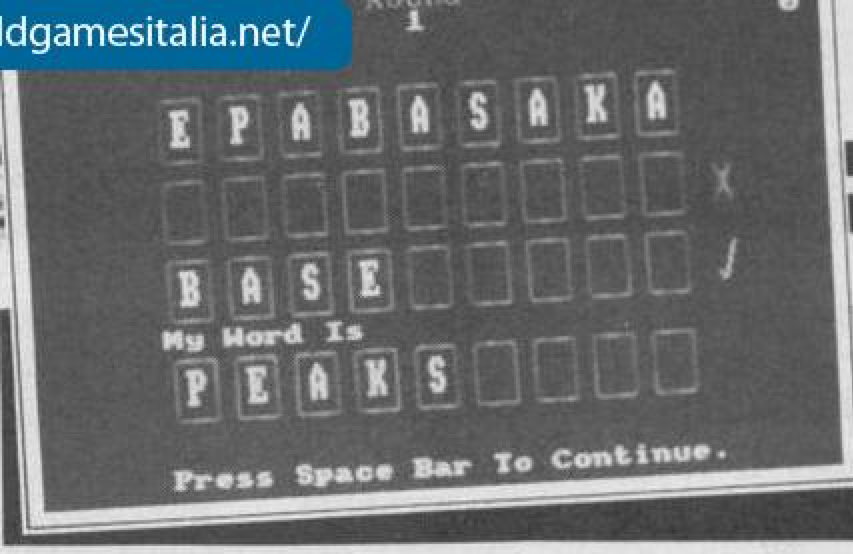
Sound 10%
Not a lot.

Playability 50%
A cinch for dustbin men everwhere.

Addictive qualities 28%
We've bin gripped more.

Value for money 20%
You've bin done.

Overall 15%
We rubbished it.



```
1
E P A B A S A K A
BASE
My Word Is
PEAKS
Press Space Bar To Continue.
```

COUNTDOWN

Macsen £9.95 cass keys only

Countdown—The game, is based on the Channel 4 television series and attempts to capture all the quizical elements present in the show. There are two basic sections to the game, featuring a letters' quiz and a number problem. On loading the game asks you to enter your name, and then the second player's name, it then switches to the Anagram game.

THE ANAGRAM GAME

The game begins with the computer prompting the players to select nine letters from the alphabet. They can be selected as consonants or vowels, but apart from that they are generated randomly. When all nine letters have been chosen the countdown begins. You have thirty seconds in which to formulate a word consisting of as many letters as possible, when the time is up the computer asks for your finished word and the second player's word. When the word has been entered it is checked by the computer's own dictionary, however if it fails to recognise a word then it asks for confirmation of the word's validity, the player with the longer word gets one point per letter. Rounds two and three are exactly the same, after completing them you are unleased into the number round.

NUMBER ROUND

In this round player two is requested to select six numbers, when chosen they are displayed at the bottom of the screen. Having done that, CECIL, the games random number generator, selects a number, you then have thirty seconds to add, multiply, divide and subtract until you reach at the number CECIL has selected. When the time is up both players enter their numbers and then they have proved their answer by showing their formulae. The player whose number is closest to CECIL's number wins. If neither arrive at a suitable formula then the computer shows how the number can be arrived at.

COUNTDOWN CONUNDRUM

Here both players have thirty seconds to unravel a nine letter anagram, the first one to spot the anagram has to stop the clock and then type the anagram. If it is correct then the winner gets ten points, remember the typing has to be quick else your time will run out.

CRITICISM

Lee

Not an excellent game, but these quiz shows never are. As a fan of the T V series, I enjoyed it, but others won't find it interesting. As usual it is poorly represented, graphically, which really does cause the poor reputation of these games. I can't really recommend it to our younger readers, but maybe their parents watch the show, this is the market to sell to. It's up to you but for the younger player it isn't really worth it.

CRITICISM

Anthony

This game is amazing. The gameplay is just so up to the minute, the graphics ... Oh come off it, it's dull, unoriginal, boring mindless crap. Playing against the computer is no fun at all, basically because it's stupid. Two player game is not much better because the players have to be very honest when asked to look their word up in the dictionary, and because no one in my immediate vicinity is, I had to play it by myself. Yet another mega game from Macsen. Don't buy it unless you enjoy wasting money!

Presentation 45%
As much as can be accepted for such a game.

Graphics 23%
Basic and unimaginative.

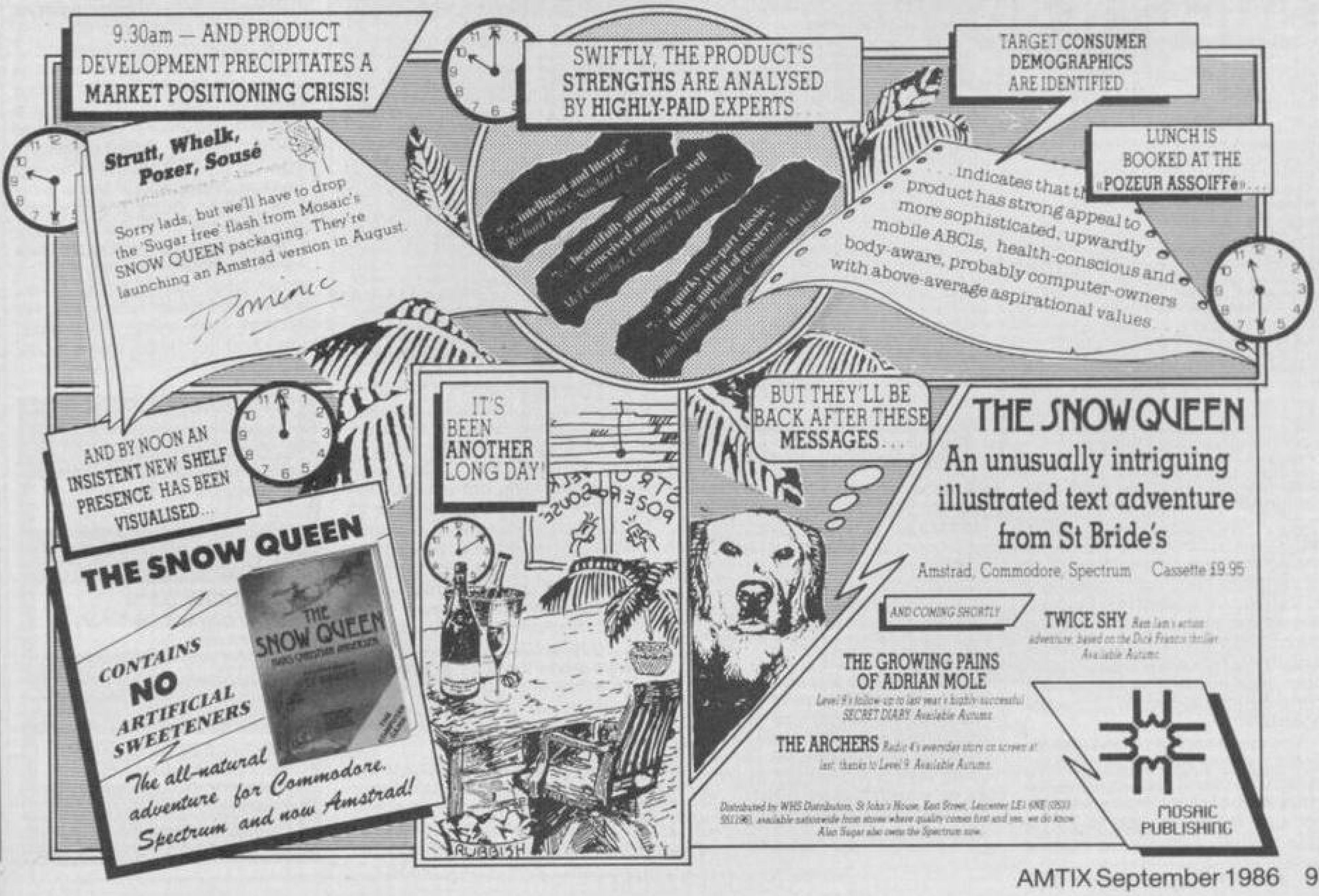
Sound 15%
Just the alerting 'beep' every now and then.

Playability 25%
Only enjoyable for your 'honest' player.

Addictive qualities 29%
Dare you to find some.

Value for money 8%
Ridiculously overpriced for what it offers.

Overall 22%
Fails to capture the atmosphere of the T V show.



9.30am — AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PRECIPITATES A MARKET POSITIONING CRISIS!
Strutt, Whelk, Poxer, Sousé
Sorry lads, but we'll have to drop the 'Sugar free' flash from Mosaic's SNOW QUEEN packaging. They're launching an Amstrad version in August.
Dominic
SWIFTLY, THE PRODUCT'S STRENGTHS ARE ANALYSED BY HIGHLY-PAID EXPERTS...
"...intelligent and literate" Richard Price, Sinclair User
"...beautifully atmospheric, well conceived and literate" Mel Croucher, Computer Trade Weekly
"...a quirky two-part classic, funny and full of mystery" John Minson, Popular Computing Weekly
TARGET CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS ARE IDENTIFIED
...indicates that the product has strong appeal to more sophisticated, upwardly mobile ABC1s, health-conscious and body-aware, probably computer-owners with above-average aspirational values
LUNCH IS BOOKED AT THE «POZEUR ASSOIFFé»...
AND BY NOON AN INSISTENT NEW SHELF PRESENCE HAS BEEN VISUALISED...
THE SNOW QUEEN
CONTAINS NO ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS
The all-natural adventure for Commodore, Spectrum and now Amstrad!
IT'S BEEN ANOTHER LONG DAY!
BUT THEY'LL BE BACK AFTER THESE MESSAGES...
RUBBISH
THE SNOW QUEEN
An unusually intriguing illustrated text adventure from St Bride's
Amstrad, Commodore, Spectrum Cassette £9.95
AND COMING SHORTLY
TWICE SHY Ram Jam's action adventure based on the Dick Francis thriller Available Autumn
THE GROWING PAINS OF ADRIAN MOLE Level 9's follow-up to last year's highly-successful SECRET DIARY. Available Autumn
THE ARCHERS Radio 4's everyday story on screen at last, thanks to Level 9. Available Autumn
Distributed by WHS Distributors, St John's House, East Street, Leicester LE1 6NE (0533) 551196, available nationwide from stores where quality comes first and we, we do know Alan Sugar also owns the Spectrum now.
MOSAIC PUBLISHING

GLADIATOR

Domark, £8.95 cass, £16.95 disk

THE THUMB
I WAS THE
CHAM

The noise and colour that was Ancient Rome. The splendour and spectacle of the games. These are some of the things you don't get with this latest release from Domark. What you do get is one, two or zero(demo) player modes, pitting you against some of the toughest dudes to ever grace the amphitheatre.

In the grand tradition of beat-em-up games, there are a total of sixteen moves you can make, with a combination of joystick and fire button, or a plethora of keys.

The plot of the one player game is that you have been captured by a Roman Legion which has ransacked your home town and razed it to the ground (never the best start to the day). As is it's wont, the legion has sold you into slavery, and thus you turn up at the gladiator school. Your one chance for freedom is to earn enough money as a gladiator to be able to pay for your freedom.

At the end of each bout, you are awarded coins by the good ol' emperor. If you win enough bouts you become the emperor's champion. Despite this, you are still not rich enough to buy your freedom, so you must try to line your pockets by betting on the outcome of other bouts.

Before each bout, you move on to the weapons screen. Here you tool up with a pretty deadly array of swords, daggers, a shield or a net. After that it's on to the amphitheatre.

Anthony

CRITICISM

If you are looking for the very worst in combat games, then look no further. We are talking bad here, I don't just mean a little bit tacky, I mean totally unplayable and mindnumbingly dull. Every time you attack, you get hit by your opponent if the Emperor's bloke just stands there doing nothing. This means that winning is not a question of skill, but more who gets bored first. About the only way to end this tedium is to try chucking things at your opponent. If you've ever tried lobbing a two handed sword around, you'll know the kind of realism we're talking about here. Really bad.

There you will find yourself pitted against the best that Rome can throw at you. The fight consists of moving around and trying to clobber the other chap with your weapon, either by striking him, or by throwing it. Obviously if you make a practice of throwing your weapons around, you are going to have to pick them up: a trying process when there is someone trying to beat your brains out with a rather large axe. The screen flashes purple when you land a hit and red when your opponent lands one. Just to add to the fun, there is a time limit as well.

Should you be fortunate enough to win, the surroundings will change, and it's time for another bout. A further 14 fights later, you become the emperor's champion. Should you be killed, it isn't too bad, unless you lose three times which ends the game and it is back to the beginning all over again.

Presentation 15%
Mutton dressed up as mutton

Graphics 13%
Some of the nastiest animation around.

Sound 10%
Sort of computerised squelching noises.

Playability 10%
Got to be a game in here somewhere.

Addictive Qualities 8%
All the addictiveness of watching grass grow

Value for money 10%
A rip off.

Overall 10%
The pits of the fight games.

SOCCER 86

Activision/Loriciels, £9.95 cass

SOCCER
86
AMSTRAD
Schneider

Inspired by the success of U.S. Gold and its *World Cup Carnival*, this game represents Activision's contribution to the long hot summer of sport.

The game comes from Loriciels, the French software house that brought you Fifth Axis — the game of inter-galactic multi-dimensional cat strangling. Now Loriciels demonstrates that the French are if possible even more Xenophobic than we are. There are five nationalities for you to choose from — all European. You can even play France against France.

Teams consist of five players plus the goal keeper, thus conforming to no set of rules known to man. Presumably 11 men would only have cluttered things up. On the pitch, you get a rostrum view of the pitch. There are five sections to the pitch, the program obviously shows the one the ball is in. You control the player the computer judges to be nearest to the ball. This player changes colour and comes under keyboard or joystick control.

The game can be played against another player or against the computer. One player uses joystick, the other keyboard (both players cannot use the keyboard). A player gets control of the ball by moving his player up to it. Once in control, the player slows down a bit whilst dribbling it. So the tactic is, in the time-honoured England tradition, to hoof it up the middle and run after it. And then, after your Maradonna style run up the middle, there's only the goal keeper to beat. As any veteran of Ocean's *Match Day* will tell you, unleashing a crashing right foot shot from the edge of the penalty area is the quickest way to get your shot saved. Shooting at goal triggers the goalkeeper, who virtually always saves the shot. So the trick is to either walk the ball over the line, or move up to the extreme edge of the goal and hoof it in the roof of the net.

Paul

CRITICISM

Oh deary me, even Activision's French pals, Loriciels, have succumbed to football fever!. Nah John, ya wanna 'ave a decent game of footy on ya Arnold do ya? Well if you're in to that kind of thing ('fraid I'm not John) I suppose you might get some kind of a buzz playing this . . . as for me . . . 'Captain Lego kicks a pigs bladder along a three mile pitch while humming the Marseillaise' is not my idea of fun. Hop off froggies, ya never were good at footy anyway and SOCCER 86 is no exception. Quite frankly I'd have more fun kicking the Amstrad about.

A neat feature of the game is the way you can alter the set up of your side. Each player has an average strength of 20, but you can alter this so that one player crawls around at strength zero whilst another does Platini impressions when set at a strength of 60.

The game shows a disregard of the laws of football reminiscent of Diego Maradonna. The set pieces are rather awkward. The throw in is always made after a set length of time, in one of three directions depending on where the receiving player is positioned. If there is no other player near, the thrower calmly passes to himself. The corners are even stranger. Regardless of the position of the players, the corner taker calmly boots it half way up the field. Kick offs? No decorum here either, the whistle blows and both sides make a rush for the ball.

Presentation 60%
Nice packaging and set up screens.

Graphics 65%
Just about adequate.

Sound 45%
Only a few spot FX.

Playability 53%
Easy to play but the binary turns are silly.

Addictive qualities 43%
A one minute wonder.

Value for money 28%
Overpriced in every way.

Overall 30%
Now where did I put my copy of Match Day.

DESIGN DESIGN

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JACK THE NIPPER

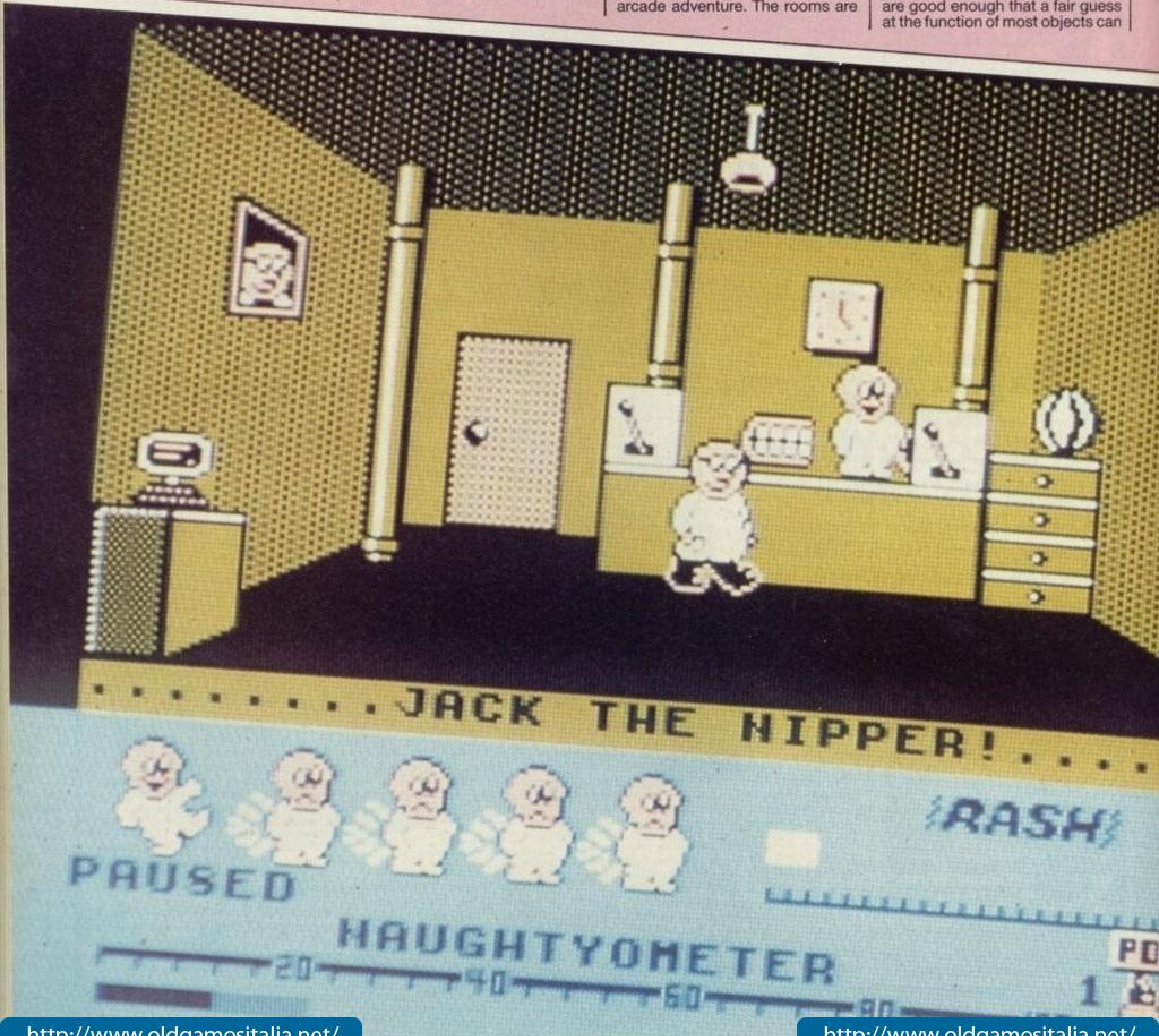
Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass

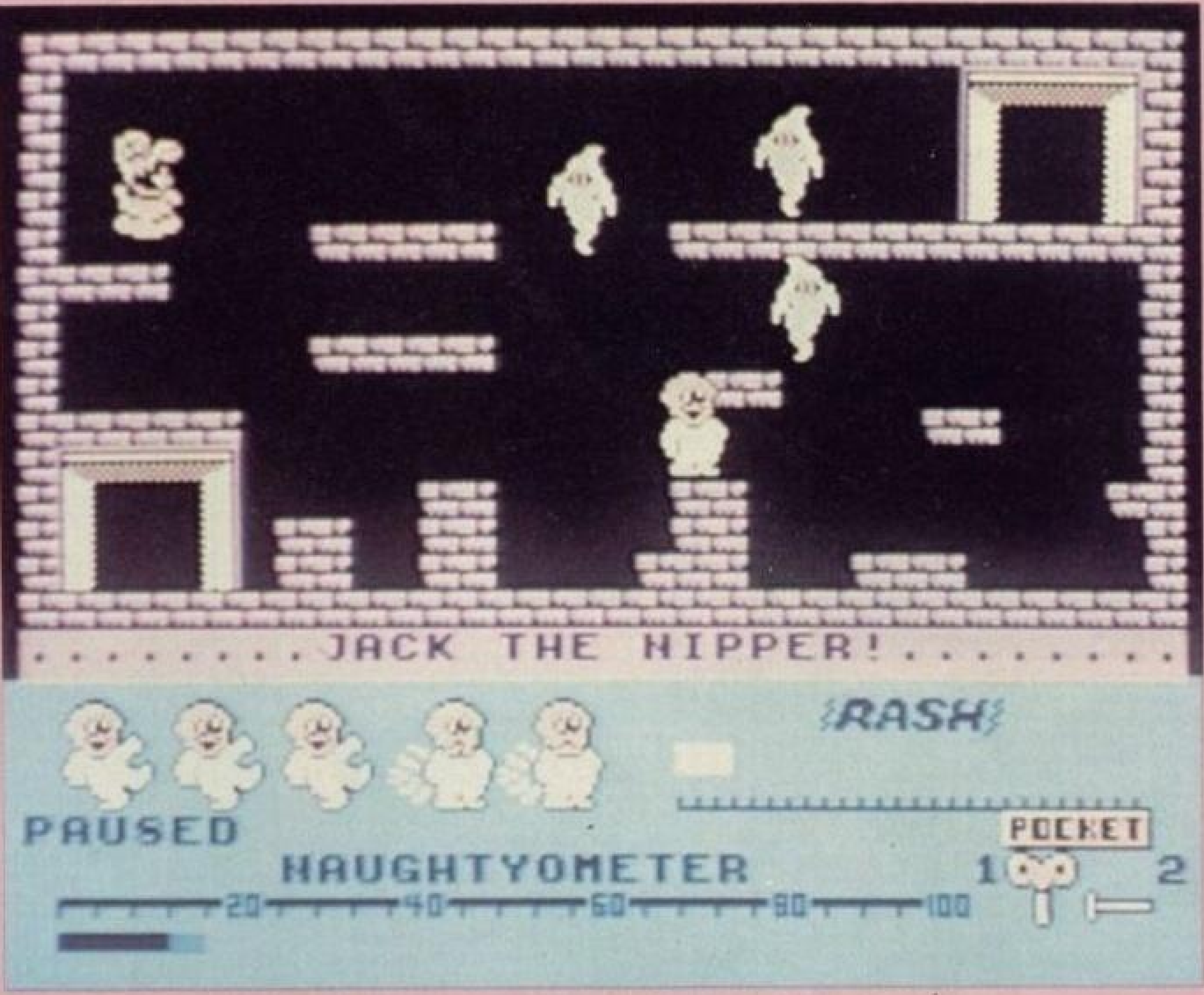
Are you naughty? I just don't mean bothersome or awkward, I mean really bloody minded sort of naughty. If you just can't wait for April 1st to come round again then rush out and buy yourself *Jack the Nipper*.

For many of us, flying around the Galaxy, blasting the enemies of truth and freedom, or slaying mythical beasts in our quest for a glittering treasure trove will forever remain just the province of day dreams and computer games. The charm of Jack the Nipper is that it blurs the edges between our computer generated fantasies and 'real life'. Perhaps you have never tried to destroy your father's allotment, his pride and joy, with a healthy covering of weed killer, but you might have thought of it.

So what terrors await Jack. No hideously beweaponed alien ships spitting death, no dragons with a breath problem here, you are faced with nothing more ghastly than a tanning as just reward for your misdemeanours.

The game takes the form of an arcade adventure. The rooms are arranged into several streets of shops and houses. Each room has several objects to be collected. The art is to work out on each screen what bits of furniture can be leapt on, and which objects you can collect. If you just want to be a little bit naughty, hurling the objects off the shelves will give you a few points, but many of the objects have specific purposes. The weed killer goes on the plants, the soap powder goes in the launderette and so on. You are not told what the object is, but the graphics are good enough that a fair guess at the function of most objects can





be made. For real wimps who haven't got a clue, Gremlin has set up a Nipper line, you can ring up and discover ways of using things to their naughtiest best.

Normally the other characters on the screen wander around in a fairly random manner, but, should you do something naughty in a room, one of the characters will move straight towards you. Your nappy rash rating goes up whenever you are in contact with any other character. So success depends on planning your escape route. You must not only be anti-social, you must also get away with it. With a combination of waiting until the people are the other side of the room, and a judicious use of shelves, you should be able to evade the wrath of the crumblies.

If you're carrying the key, then in certain locations, like the bank and the museum, you will be able to go through the walls behind the radiators to Manic Mineresque screens. Mapping is complex but vital. Many entrances are one way. For instance, going through the radiator in the bank will put you back in your bedroom, but you cannot go the other way. Obviously mapping is essential to give you the quickest routes between object and the room where the object is used.

CRITICISM

1 **When I saw this one on the Spectrum I really thought that the Amstrad version wouldn't come close to it, how wrong I was.** Jack the Nipper **on the Amstrad is truly excellent. The graphics look as if they have been lifted out of a cartoon strip, the characters are large and jolly and the backgrounds are also excellent, as a whole they give the impression that someone has worked very hard to create the effect to such a 'finished' standard. The sound is very good; there are many different sound effects during the game and the tune on the title screen is brilliant. I've been playing this for ages now and I can't really see myself putting it down for a long while yet so I strongly recommend it to all you budding naughty-persons.**

2 It's good to see computer games coming down to earth at last. No more space blast ups, no damsels in distress; this game deals with the everyday problems of naughty folk. The graphics are crisp,clear and amusing, and the sound effects and tune are nicely done. The puzzles are well put together. They are amusing and not too obscure. What would you do with a tube of glue? Well, inspiration isn't far away, just wander around the town for a bit and you soon think of something. It is good to see an original variation of the arcade adventure theme. These games were really getting stuck in a rut since the last Wally game, and it is good to see there is someone else out there with a bit of humour and imagination.

3 *Right, you wimps, it's time to prove yourself to be a really naughty so and so.* **Jack the Nipper** *has all the elements that are reminiscent of the Sweeny Toddler comic strip, and it is amazing fun. You can kill off all your dad's prize blooms, smash plates in the china shop and scare the cat to death. It's brill. The graphics are presented in a great comic strip fashion with Jack looking so sweet in his romper suit, but lurking behind that cute face is a master of naughtiness. I loved the ratings that Jack gives you at the end of the game, ranging from Goody - Goody to namby pamby and so on up the scale; it is these humorous touches that elevate the game into sheer brilliance. This is a game for all arcade adventures and also has a massive scope for anyone with a naughty streak, but if you're a wimp you've got no chance!.*

Presentation 91%
With a free badge!

Graphics 93%
Some of the best yet on the Amstrad.

Sound 90%
Good tune, good spot effects.

Playability 94%
Easy to pick up.

Addictive qualities 92%
Hard to put down.

Value for money 90%
Worth parting with a hard earned tenner.

Overall 93%
Original, fun, and genuinely amusing.

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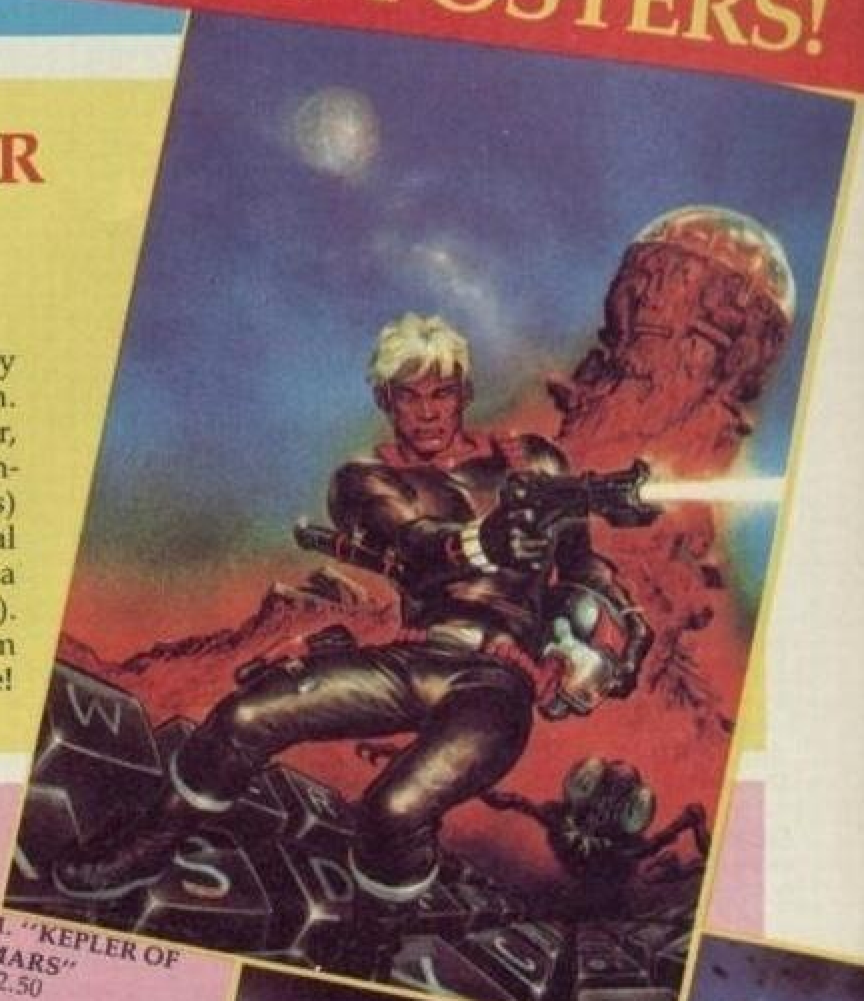

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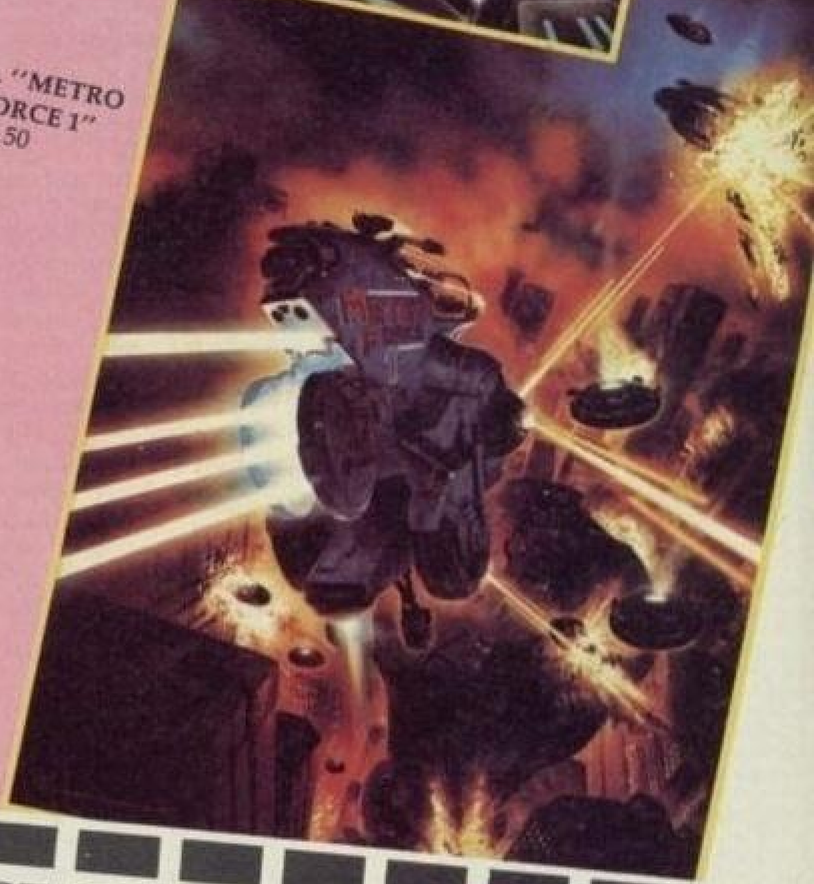

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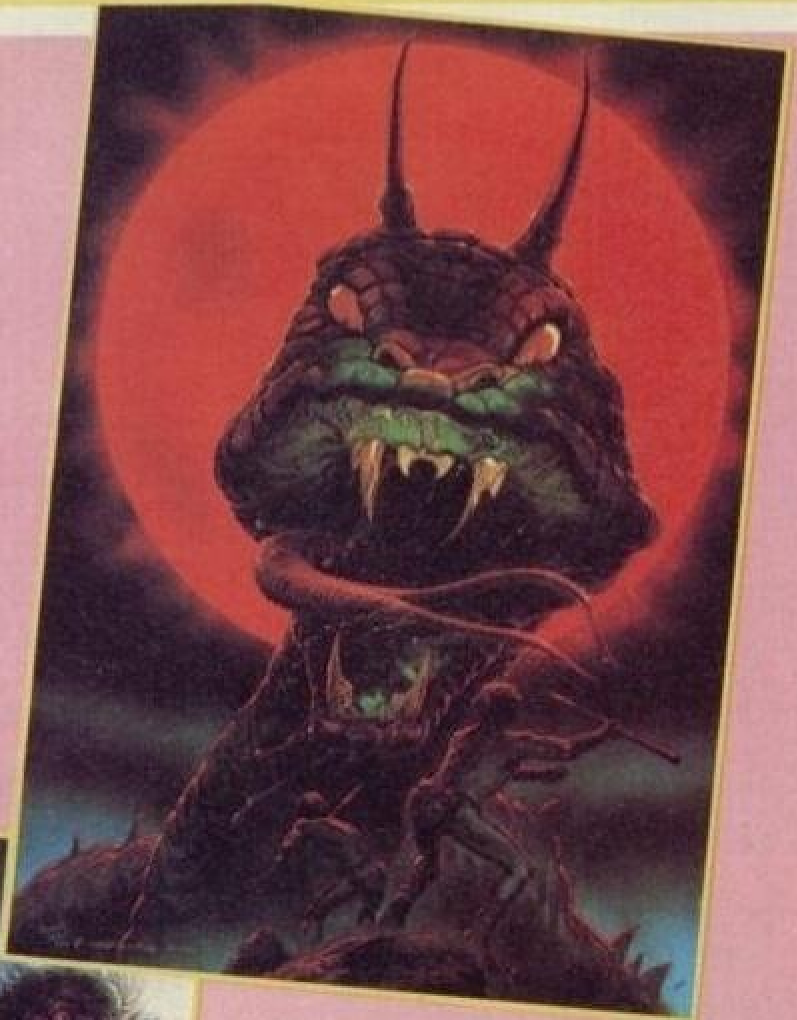

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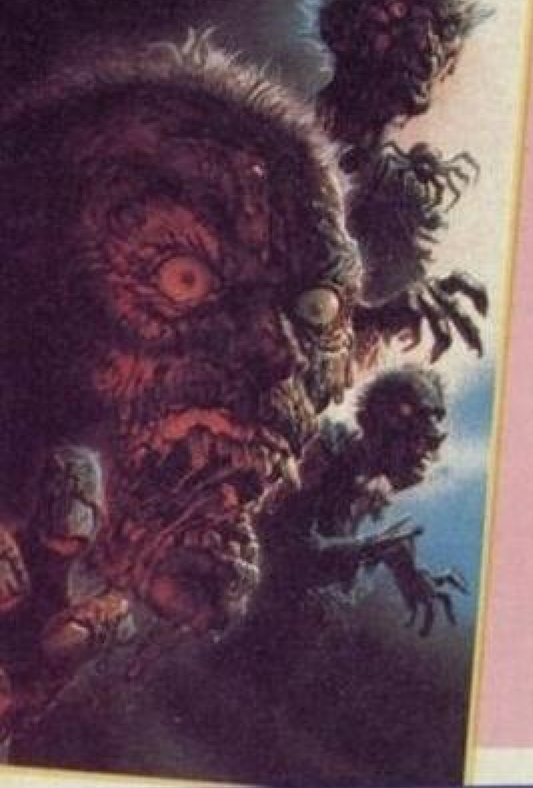

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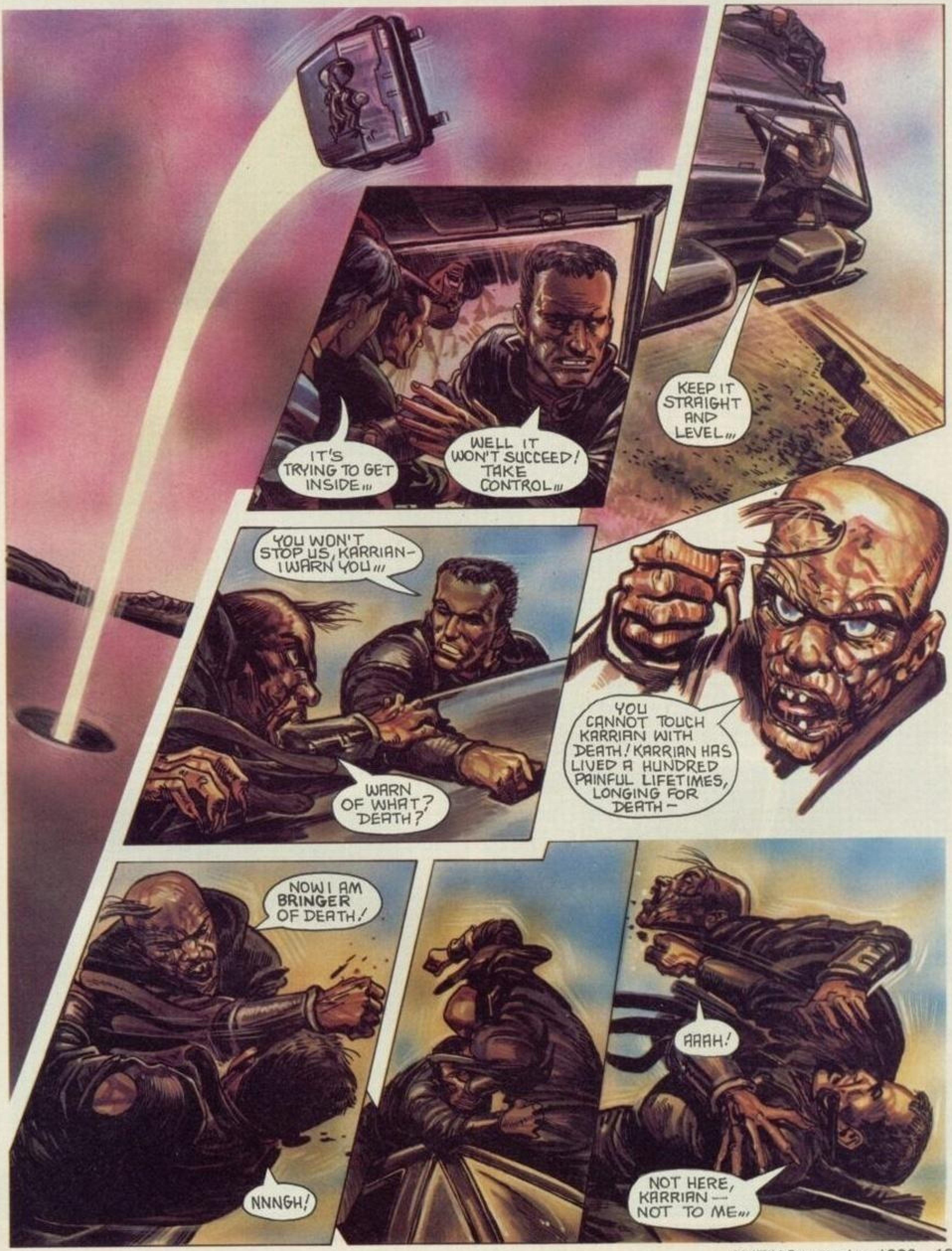
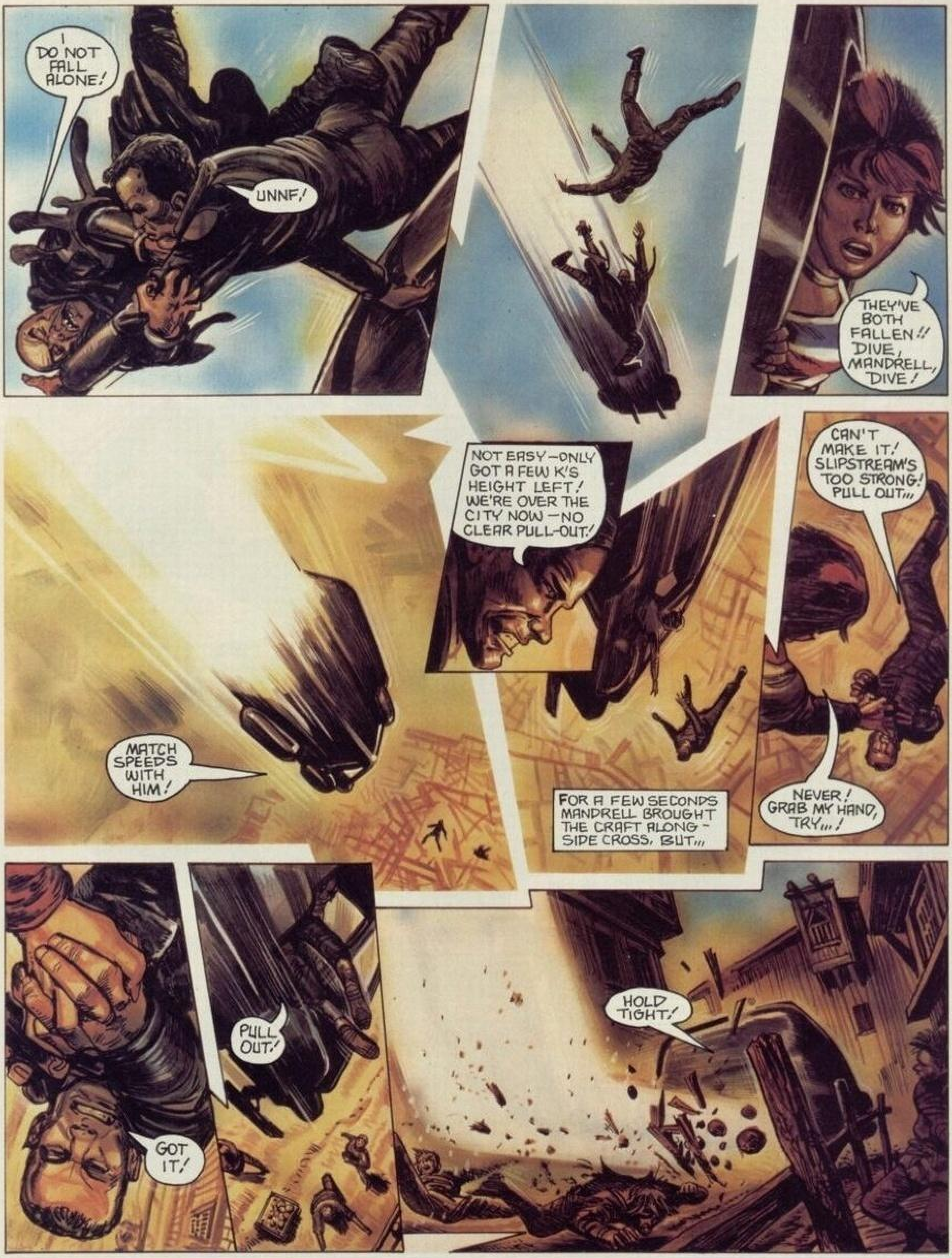
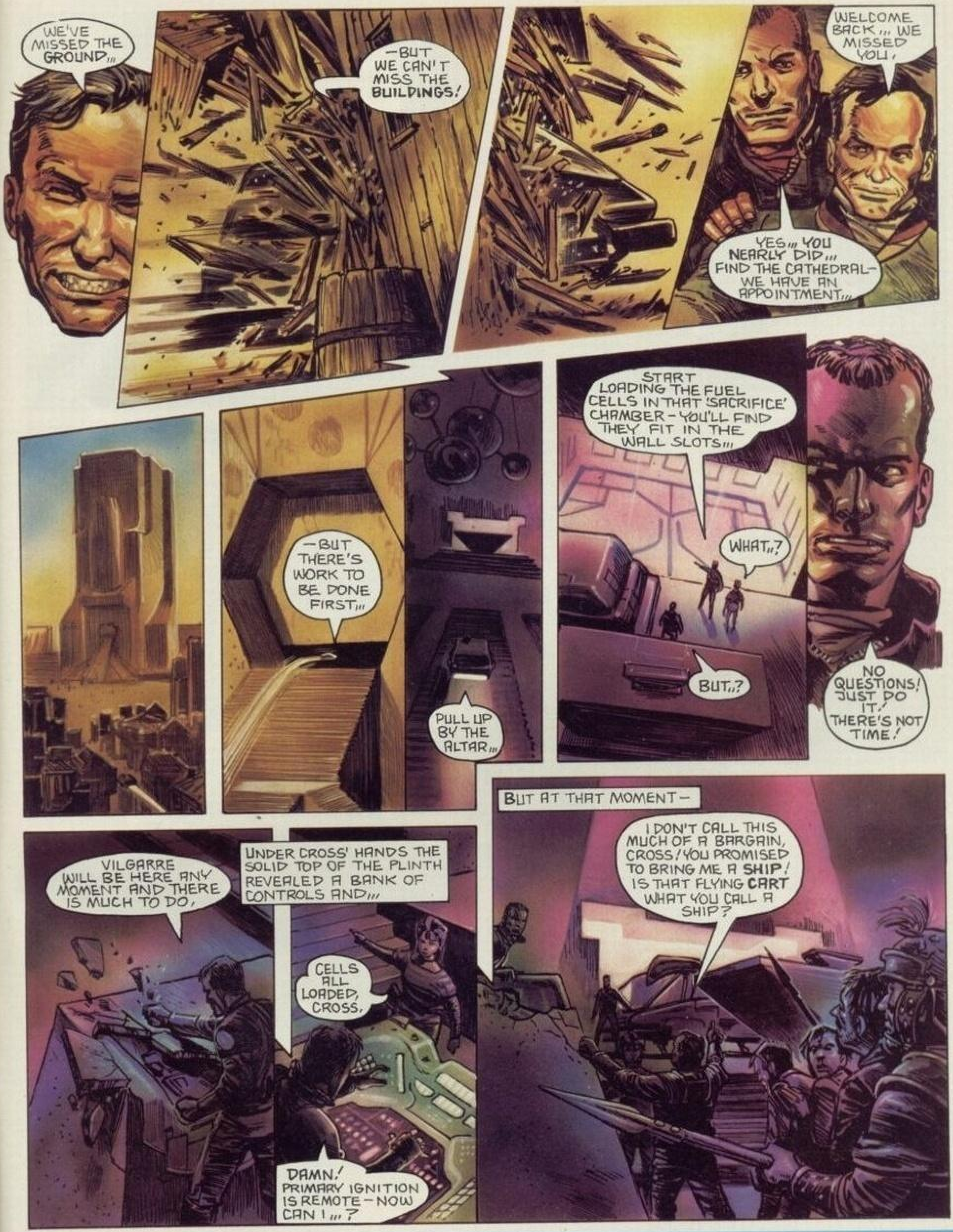
UPDATE:
Cross was almost there, he'd found the fuel cells he needed, he knew where the big ship was hidden and he had the time to get there, rescue his passengers and get them away back to Earth. But then there was Karrian. . .

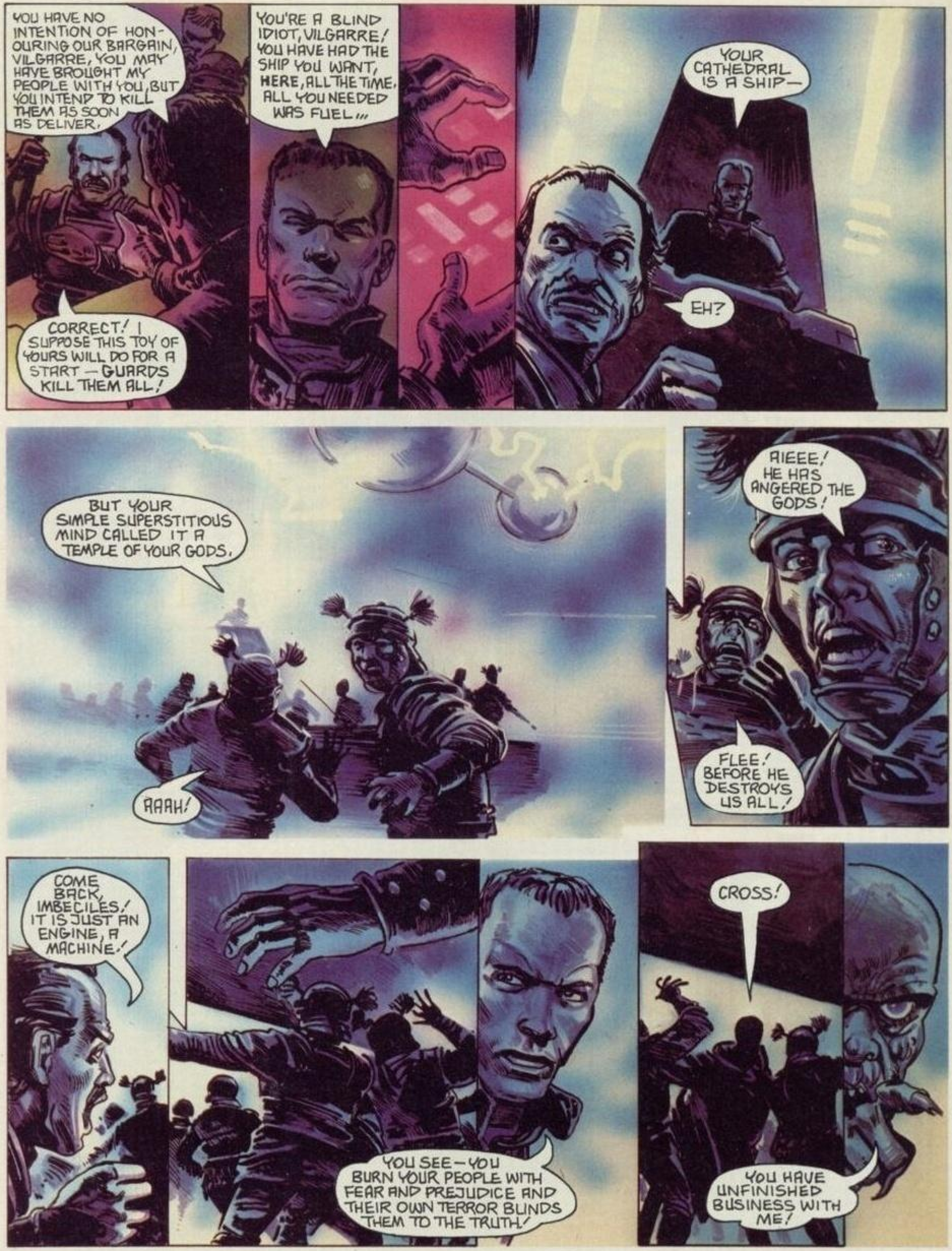
THE TERMINAL MAN


IT'S TRYING TO GET INSIDE...
WELL IT WON'T SUCCEED! TAKE CONTROL...
KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND LEVEL...
YOU WON'T STOP US, KARRIAN- I WARN YOU...
WARN OF WHAT? DEATH?
YOU CANNOT TOUCH KARRIAN WITH DEATH! KARRIAN HAS LIVED A HUNDRED PAINFUL LIFETIMES, LONGING FOR DEATH-
NOW I AM BRINGER OF DEATH!
NNNGH!
AAAH!
NOT HERE, KARRIAN — NOT TO ME...


I DO NOT FALL ALONE!
UNNF!
THEY'VE BOTH FALLEN!! DIVE, MANDRELL, DIVE!
MATCH SPEEDS WITH HIM!
NOT EASY—ONLY GOT A FEW K'S HEIGHT LEFT! WE'RE OVER THE CITY NOW—NO CLEAR PULL-OUT!
FOR A FEW SECONDS MANDRELL BROUGHT THE CRAFT ALONGSIDE CROSS, BUT...
CAN'T MAKE IT! SLIPSTREAM'S TOO STRONG! PULL OUT...
NEVER! GRAB MY HAND, TRY...!
GOT IT!
PULL OUT!
HOLD TIGHT!

STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


WE'VE MISSED THE GROUND...
—BUT WE CAN'T MISS THE BUILDINGS!
WELCOME BACK... WE MISSED YOU.
YES... YOU NEARLY DID... FIND THE CATHEDRAL— WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT...
—BUT THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE FIRST...
PULL UP BY THE ALTAR...
START LOADING THE FUEL CELLS IN THAT 'SACRIFICE' CHAMBER — YOU'LL FIND THEY FIT IN THE WALL SLOTS...
WHAT..?
BUT..?
NO QUESTIONS! JUST DO IT! THERE'S NOT TIME!
VILGARRE WILL BE HERE ANY MOMENT AND THERE IS MUCH TO DO.
UNDER CROSS' HANDS THE SOLID TOP OF THE PLINTH REVEALED A BANK OF CONTROLS AND...
CELLS ALL LOADED, CROSS.
DAMN! PRIMARY IGNITION IS REMOTE — NOW CAN I...?
BUT AT THAT MOMENT—
I DON'T CALL THIS MUCH OF A BARGAIN, CROSS! YOU PROMISED TO BRING ME A SHIP! IS THAT FLYING CART WHAT YOU CALL A SHIP?


YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF HONOURING OUR BARGAIN, VILGARRE, YOU MAY HAVE BROUGHT MY PEOPLE WITH YOU, BUT YOU INTEND TO KILL THEM AS SOON AS DELIVER.
CORRECT! I SUPPOSE THIS TOY OF YOURS WILL DO FOR A START — GUARDS KILL THEM ALL!
YOU'RE A BLIND IDIOT, VILGARRE! YOU HAVE HAD THE SHIP YOU WANT, HERE, ALL THE TIME. ALL YOU NEEDED WAS FUEL...
YOUR CATHEDRAL IS A SHIP—
EH?
BUT YOUR SIMPLE SUPERSTITIOUS MIND CALLED IT A TEMPLE OF YOUR GODS.
AAAH!
AIEEE! HE HAS ANGERED THE GODS!
FLEE! BEFORE HE DESTROYS US ALL!
COME BACK, IMBECILES! IT IS JUST AN ENGINE, A MACHINE!
YOU SEE—YOU BURN YOUR PEOPLE WITH FEAR AND PREJUDICE AND THEIR OWN TERROR BLINDS THEM TO THE TRUTH!
CROSS!
YOU HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS WITH ME!

Next month: Just Desserts...

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Without doubt the Amstrad range of computers is rapidly establishing itself at the forefront of the personal micro industry.

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LEADERBOARD features all the skills, techniques and elements of the game, right from amateur status to touring professional. Stunning graphics and multiple courses ensures that LEADERBOARD is strokes ahead of its rivals!

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LAW OF THE WEST'S astounding interactive adventure puts you right in the middle of turbulent Old West action. As the sheriff of Gold Gulch, as tough a Wild West town as there ever was, you'll have all you can do to survive 'til sundown.

Standing in your way will be all manner of hard-case gunslingers, and desperados looking to rob the bank, run roughshod over innocent townspeople and plant you in Boot Hill!

Ultra-large graphics and lifelike action deliver excitement so real you can almost smell the gunpowder! All these games are available now especially for the Amstrad at better computer stores, nationwide.

LEADER BOARD

AMSTRAD

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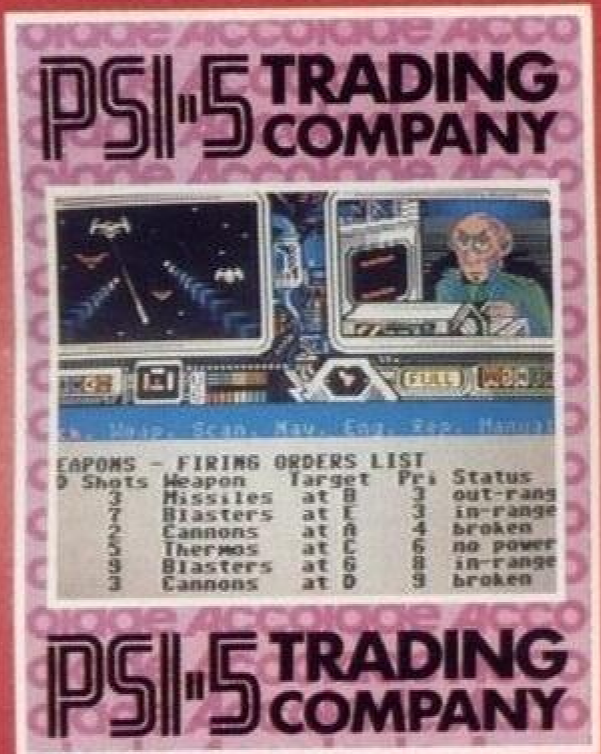

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.. Whip. Scan. Nav. Eng. Rep. Manual
EAPONS - FIRING ORDERS LIST
 Shots Weapon    Target  Pri Status
   3   Missiles  at B     3  out-rang
   7   Blasters  at E     3  in-range
   2   Cannons   at A     4  broken
   5   Thermos   at C     6  no power
   9   Blasters  at G     8  in-range
   3   Cannons   at D     9  broken
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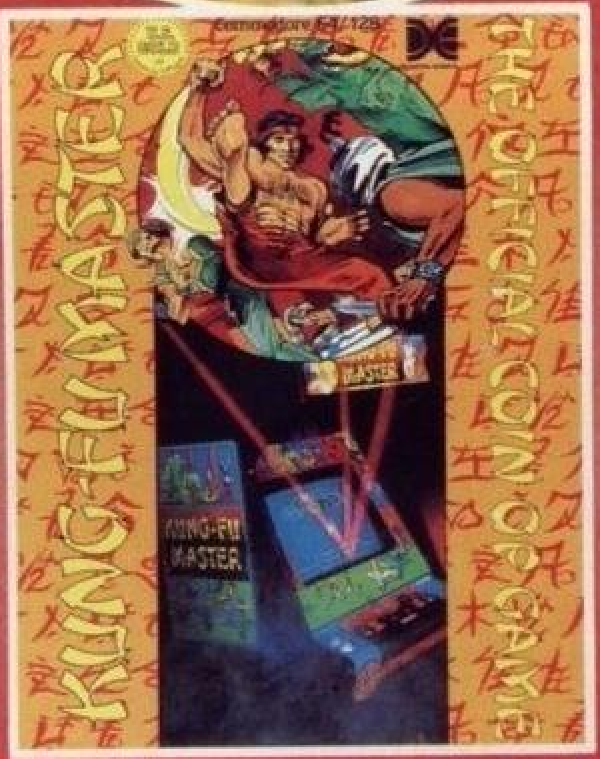

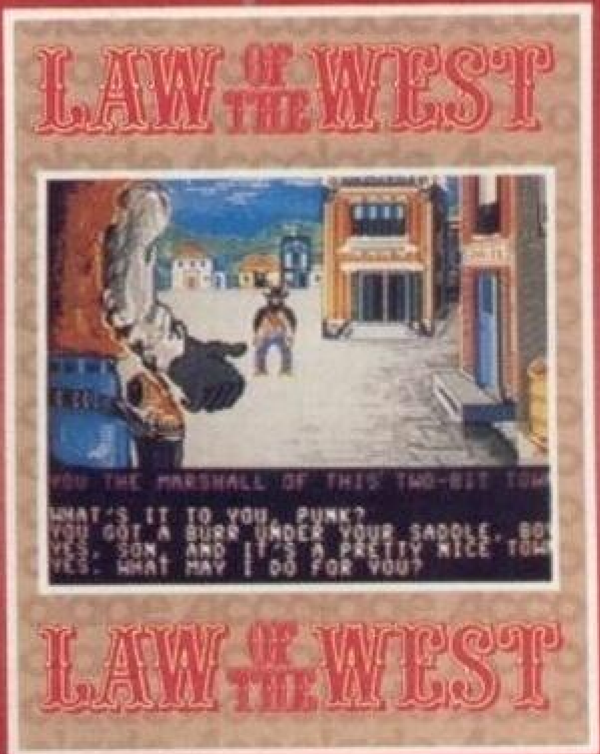

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WHAT'S IT TO YOU, PUNK?
YOU GOT A BURR UNDER YOUR SADDLE, BO
YES, SON, AND IT'S A PRETTY NICE TOW
YES. WHAT MAY I DO FOR YOU?
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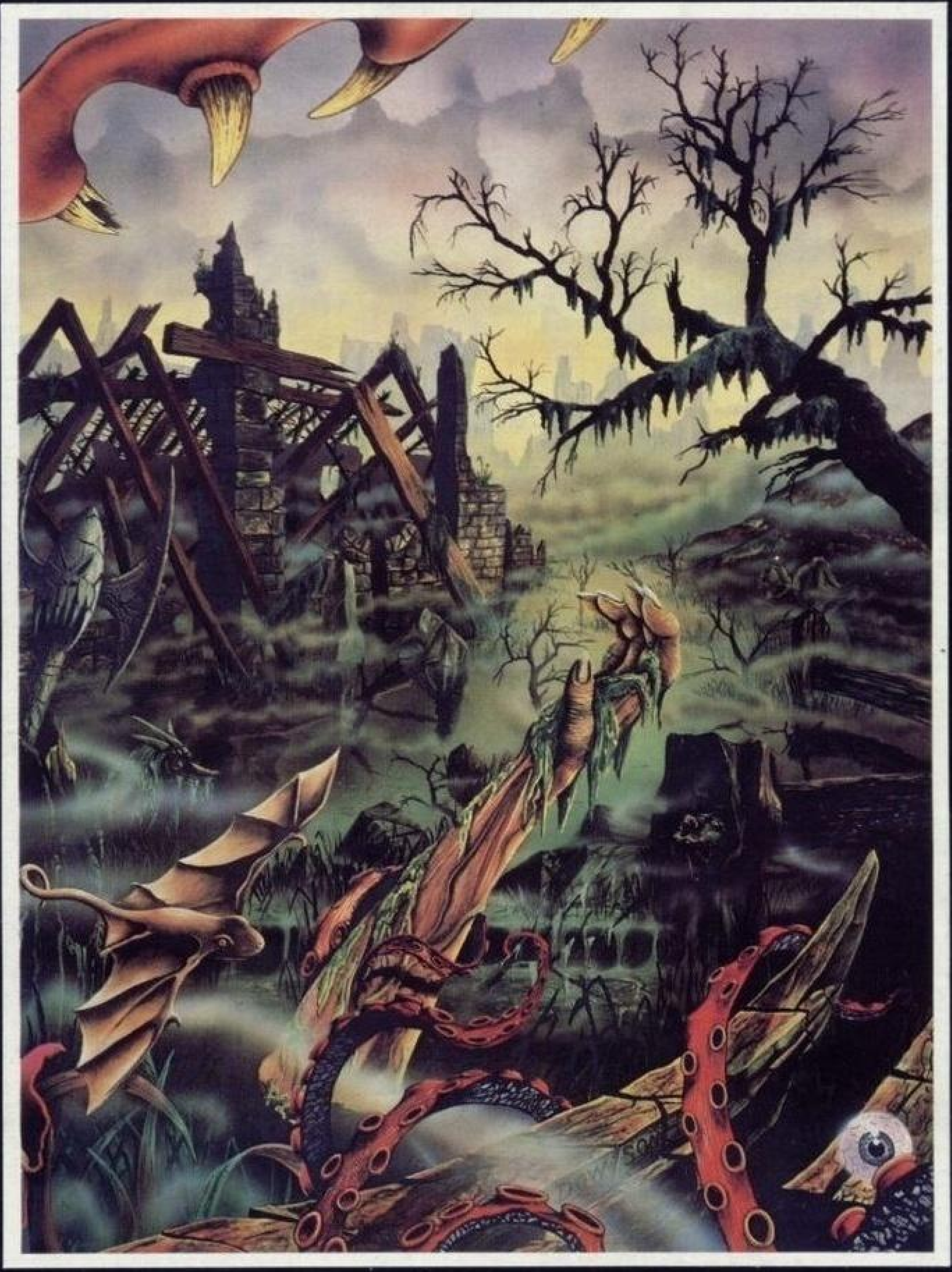

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